



Baler teeth are spaced 4 in. apart on a 4-ft. length of 1-in. sq. tubing that bolts onto mower's hitch plate.

## Dethatcher Mounts On Riding Mower

Bob Wenzel made a dethatcher for the back of his Deere riding mower by mounting a series of baler teeth on a 4-ft. length of 1-in. sq. tubing, which bolts onto the mower's hitch plate.

"I use it whenever I mow my lawn. It does a good job of dethatching, but it also works the ground every time I mow my lawn, gradually leveling the lawn," he says. "It doesn't change the lawn's look a lot every time I go over it, but by the end of the mowing season I can sure see a big difference."

He bought the baler teeth at a farm supply store. The teeth are spaced 4 in. apart and attach to the tubing 2 1/4-in. long, 1/4-in. dia. bolts, with flat washers on each side and a stop nut on the bolt to keep it from coming loose. The tubing is secured to the mower's hitch plate by two shorter lengths of tubing, which are held on by four bolts.

Wenzel can raise or lower the dethatcher by removing two bolts that secure the hitch plate to the mower, and then tilting the hitch

plate up or down. He can adjust the height of the tubing by adding or subtracting washers. "Usually I keep the baler teeth flush with the bottom of the mower's tires," says Wenzel.

"I built it after I built a new house and my lawn started settling in places. I wanted a way to fill in the low spots with black dirt and shave off the high spots. The teeth are angled backward, which makes them less aggressive when I go forward but more more aggressive when I go in reverse," says Wenzel. "Now my lawn is as level as a golf course. If I want, I can bolt on a 2-ft. extension to cover more ground."

"My total cost was only about \$50. I paid \$2.50 apiece for the tines. The rest was for the square tubing, bolts, washers, and stop nuts. Deere makes a similar front-mounted dethatcher that is equipped with a manual lever that lifts it up, but it sells for about \$500."

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## "Head Holder" For Young Calves

Holding even a young calf for dehorning, implanting, castrating or other less than pleasant tasks isn't easy. It's also stressful for the animal and can make it hard to get the job done right.

"Animals may not love the Easy B-Z Calf Restrainer, but it makes things easier on them and the operator," says Cheryl Mohn, Udder Tech, Inc. "Plus, with our calf restrainer, working with the calf is a one person job."

Mohn, who also operates a dairy farm, uses the restrainer herself. "We usually hook it to the fence and guide the calf into it," she explains. "Hook the chain behind the ears, and it holds the calf in place."

The Calf Restrainer comes in two styles. A screw on type can be mounted on 2-in. thick lumber. It's priced at \$89. The spring-loaded clamp style can be used on wire panels, loader buckets or 1-in. boards. Essentially, it works on any surface with an inch or smaller width. It's priced at \$99.

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Calf Restrainer makes things easier on both calf and operator.



Spring-loaded clamp style can be used on wire panels, loader buckets or 1-in. boards.

## "Coffee Can" Bird House

Empty plastic coffee containers can be used to make low-cost, durable bluebird houses, says Bob Wenzel of Fond du Lac, Wis., who mounts each container on a 6-ft. length of conduit set 2 ft. deep in the ground.

The 2-lb., 1-oz. coffee container is placed upside down and has a 2-in. dia. hole drilled into it.

"It costs almost nothing to build, and because it's plastic it'll last almost forever," says Wenzel. "Another advantage is that animals can't crawl up the conduit and get at the birds."

I use Maxwell coffee containers because they have very large lids, which can be easily removed for clean out," says Wenzel. "Before I build each bird house I wash out the container with bleach to remove the coffee smell."

He uses a hole saw to drill a 2-in. dia. hole into the side of the can, next to the handle, where the bird goes in. To support the conduit he drills a hole into the top of the handle and then pushes the conduit to the bottom of the container but not through it. Then he drills



Sidney Stubbs built this heavy-duty log skidder for his ATV. "The biggest log I've hauled was 39 in. in diameter, even though my ATV is only 36 in. high," he says.

## Little Skidder Moves Big Logs

Moving big logs with an ATV is no sweat for Sidney Stubbs. The sawmill operator can skid out enough logs in 25 min. to keep him busy in the mill for several days.

"The biggest log I have hauled was 39 in. dia., even though my quad is only 36 in. high," says Stubbs.

Stubbs' skidder loads itself. No hydraulics or winches are needed. Stubbs used a fairly standard skidder design with a top arch and a forward arch. The lift mechanism is a 1 1/4-in. round steel bar with a sliding ring and hook. The bar is welded to the front of the yoke, just behind the hitch and extends back and up at a 45 degree angle to a point 6 in. ahead of the top arch. The last 6 in. of the bar are parallel to the ground, forming a sliding ring rest.

To skid out a log, Stubbs backs the yoke over it until the front arch of the skidder rests against the end of the log. A log chain wrapped around the log is then attached as tight as possible to the sliding ring hook. This places the hook at a point on the diagonal rod closest to the top of the log.

"When I pull ahead with the quad, the sliding ring is dragged back up the diagonal to the ring rest, pulling the chained end of the log up off the ground," explains Stubbs. "I put some oil on the bar and it slides right up."

Stubbs says the skidder had to be built strong to handle the big loads he puts on it. He used 3/8-in. 3 by 3-in. steel tubing for the top and front arches on the skidder. The 10-in. wide wheels have inner tubes to handle the torque on turns. Stubbs recalls breaking the beads on the tires when he first tried them without tubes. He also had to upgrade the diagonal bar from its original 1-in. diameter after it bent under load.

"To make the arches in the yoke, I cut 22 1/2 degree wedges out of the 3 by 3 tubing and then bent and welded them tight," says Stubbs. "I also welded small gussets on the inside of the first bends to reinforce them."

Axle hubs were welded to pieces of angle iron welded to the lower back corner of the top arch. Mounting the wheels behind the arch even a couple of inches moves a significant amount of the load weight forward onto the hitch. This gives the ATV vital traction as it begins to tow the skidder.

"You need at least 350 cc on the quad to use this," says Stubbs. "You also have to be careful the load doesn't push you down a hill."

Stubbs has an 8,000-lb. winch mounted to the front of his ATV, which he can hook to a log being pulled.

a 1/4-in. dia. hole through both the tubing and the handle and uses a plastic tie to secure the tubing to the handle, which keeps the wind from blowing the can around.

He also drills a pair of 1/8-in. dia. holes on front and back of the can, under the hole where the bird goes in, to insert a twig perch.

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Lift mechanism is a 1 1/4-in. round steel bar with a sliding ring and hook.



Bar is welded to front of yoke, just behind the hitch and extends back and up at a 45 degree angle.

The forward arch starts out parallel to the ground and at the height of the quad hitch. About a foot from the upright arch, it steps down a couple inches to the level of the wheel. This provides added stability to both the skidder and the quad.

Several add-ons make skidding logs easier. One is a length of pipe welded to the forward arch to hold a cant hook. A chain hook is welded to the forward arch for cases where a log needs to be dragged a short distance before being lifted into position for skidding. Two stump deflectors made from 1-in. steel rod are mounted ahead of the wheels. The front hitch has a handle made from one jaw of a pipe wrench.

"I look for worn out pipe wrenches," says Stubbs. "The jaws make great handles. Your hand will never slip on them."

The top arch has an inside width of 36-in. and an inside height of 39 in. The forward arch and hitch measures 68 in. front to rear.

"You would be amazed how much you can pull," says Stubbs. "I've used it to skid 45-gal. barrels of oil and 45-ft. long oil well casings. I even move power poles around with it."

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Plastic coffee container is mounted upside down on a metal pole.