

Garden Tractor Fitted With Air Compressor

"I bought an old electric air compressor at a yard sale, then tore it apart and mounted it on front of my 1972 Deere 112 garden tractor. It works great and I can take it anywhere on my farm where I need air," says Richard Sands, McConnelsville, Ohio.

The compressor was mounted on a small cart and belt-driven by an electric motor. He paid \$10 for a small portable air tank and bolted it onto a metal frame on front of the tractor. He wired a pressure switch in series with the tractor's electric clutch circuit. "The switch automatically turns the compressor on whenever the air tank calls for air," says Sands.

The compressor is belt-driven off one side of the tractor engine, using the same pulley that originally belt-drove the tractor's belly-mounted mower deck. A modified belt guard off the mower deck protects a belt that now drives the compressor. He also installed a quick connect coupler to accept an air chuck. And just in case he accidentally runs into something, Sands used 2-in. dia. steel tubing to make a bumper that protects the compressor.

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An old electric air compressor and a small portable air tank mounts on front of Sands' Deere garden tractor. Compressor is belt-driven off tractor engine.

"Weed Whacker" Compost Aerator

"It used to take me several hours to stir up compost in my stationary compost bins. By using an ordinary bulb auger hooked up to a weed whacker, it now takes only a couple of minutes per bin," says Joseph Parducci, Hampshire, Ill.

"It has a lot more power than if you mounted the auger on a cordless drill, so it works faster and won't burn out," says Parducci.

He removed the weed whacker's spring wound drive from below the power head, keeping the spool drive housing which includes a nut at the end of the spool, then cut the shaft to a 6-in. length and inserted a 3/16-in. key stock. He inserted the bulb auger into the chuck. "The weed whacker's spool head happened to have a 3/8 by 24 thread, which is the same as the drill chuck," says Parducci.

He also added a length of conduit to the weed whacker's handle to form a 2-handed cross-brace. He mounted the throttle, originally located on the weed whacker's handle, onto the conduit.

"I came up with the idea last winter when we built 3-ft. sq. compost bins from wire cou panels that we purchased at Tractor Supply. It took a lot of time to rotate the compost to keep it cooking. By placing a thermometer in the middle of the compost pile, we know right away when the compost needs to be rotated. I had tried using a 2-ft. bulb auger on a cordless drill, but the drill was underpowered and burned up."

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Close-up view of auger shows, from top down, auxiliary handle, drill chuck key, nut that's part of spool housing, and drill chuck.



Parducci attached an ordinary bulb auger to his weed whacker. "It works fast and won't burn out," he says.



"Hose Harness" Attaches To Buckets, Tanks

You can keep hoses from crawling out of buckets and stock tanks with this new "hose harness" from Matt Oskey of Farmer, Ohio.

It consists of a 12-in. high, powdercoated metal rod that's bent at the bottom and looped at the top. It tightly holds any size garden hose.

"It works something like a paper clip," says Oskey. "I use it on my cattle and horse tanks, but it'll work on everything from 5-gal. buckets to 55-gal. drums. I plan to soon offer another model that will fit on plastic tanks with a big lip around the top."

Sells for \$7 plus S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Matt Oskey, P.O. Box 42, Farmer, Ohio 43520 (ph 419 519-0237; mjoskey@gmail.com).



Powdercoated metal rod is bent at bottom and looped at top to hold any size garden hose.

Tools Make Grafting Easy

Adding new apple varieties to a family orchard is easy and cheap once you know how to graft. All you need is rootstock, scion wood (twigs from a donor tree), and the right tools. Nick Botner says grafting is not hard to do and the benefits are huge. His orchard collection of 4,000 apple varieties is considered the largest in the world.

"It's good to go through the orchard in the fall and see and taste so many varieties," says Botner. "Grafting made collecting these trees possible. I couldn't afford to buy them all."

Grafting is as easy as slicing through the stem of rootstock at an angle and making a matching cut on the scion wood. The goal is to match the cambium (bark layers) as much as possible so the sap can flow through the graft.

The simplest form of grafting tool is a sharp knife. Botner did all of his early grafting with a knife. But as he grew older and as the number of grafts a year increased, he turned to other grafting tools. He recommends trying a hand-grafting tool if doing a moderate number of grafts or simply not wanting to use a knife. These pliers-like hand tools offer as many as three sets of blades for multiple types of grafts. Prices vary from around \$50 on up. A.M. Leonard, Inc. sells an Italian made hand-grafting tool for \$74.49 (ph 800 543-8955; www.amleo.com).

His preferred tool is a Top Grafter made in New Zealand. It can be mounted to a bench or used in the field and makes perfectly matching V cuts. A.M. Leonard offers the tool for \$422.49.

Apple rootstock in dwarf, semi-dwarf and standard tree sizes – as well as apple variety scion wood – are available from a wide variety of fruit tree suppliers and nurseries. Scion wood of newer varieties should be purchased as a way to support the apple breeding programs that developed them. However, older heritage varieties can often be obtained from



This pliers-like grafting tool offers as many as 3 sets of blades for multiple types of grafts.



Grafter tool makes perfectly matching V cuts.

friends and relatives.

Whether using a special tool or a sharp knife, Botner encourages people to try grafting and not to worry about making perfect grafts. He knows what he is talking about, having made an estimated 20,000 grafts in his life...so far.

"Despite everything you do, they will often survive, if even one side of the cambium layer is matched," he says. "Even a bad graft can make it."

He sells scion wood from his collection and for \$5 will send out a list of available varieties and their prices.

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Some of the best new ideas we hear about are "made it myself" inventions born in farmers' workshops. If you've got a new idea or favorite gadget you're proud of, we'd like to hear about it. Send along a photo or two, and a description of what it is and how it works. Is it being manufactured commercially? If so where can interested farmers buy it? Are you looking for manufacturers, dealers or distributors? Send to FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044 or call toll-free 800 834-9665. Or you can submit an idea at our website at www.farmshow.com.

Mark Newhall, Editor

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"Made It Myself"