

Hydraulic Platforms Speed Up Tree Work

Save time picking, thinning and pruning fruit trees with Phil Brown Welding Corp.'s new hydraulic work platform. The two stations on each platform run separately off the hydraulics from a tractor and are built by the Conklin, Mich., equipment company.

"There's similar stuff out there, but many are just stationary. This one goes up and down and in and out and is more versatile," says Dave Brown, product manager with the family business. "We've gotten a lot of good feedback. Some orchard owners have bought second units because of the labor savings."

Less than 60 in. wide to fit between tree rows, the platforms raise up to 8 ft. and out an additional 5 ft. to allow workers to do a variety of work on trees.

Customers used them earlier this season to pick peaches and will use them again for

the apple harvest. This year, the access from the high platform will be especially helpful, Brown says, because most of the apples are at the top of the trees due to spring frost. Later on, the platform can be used for tree maintenance chores.

Many customers mount the hydraulic work platform on Phil Brown's N Model box shuttle, but it can be mounted on any running gear. Some install two sets of the platforms on a longer trailer. Cost for a two-station unit is \$8,900, available through Phil Brown Welding Corp.

The company also offers an optional trellis wirepuller to use with the platform.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Phil Brown Welding Corp., 4689 8 Mile Rd. N.W., Conklin, Mich. 49403 (ph 616 784-3046; www.philbrownwelding.com).



Work platform has 2 stations that run separately off tractor hydraulics. Stations go up and down and in and out, allowing workers to do a variety of jobs on fruit trees.

Old Plow Makes Slick Berry Planter

Bob Fredrickson took the backache out of planting berry bushes with his modified IH plow. With an acre of blueberries, half an acre of blackberries and about 4 acres of raspberries, it has had plenty of use. He first tills the ground and then comes in with his one row planter.

"This past spring, I used it to plant 1,000 asparagus roots," says Fredrickson. "I dropped them in as fast as I could, and they came up about 6 in. to 1 ft. apart."

Fredrickson says the planter was easy to put together and used old equipment headed for scrap. It consists of the front end of a 1940's vintage, one-bottom plow. He removed the plowshare, trimmed the shank and mounted a shovel plow to it. He chopped the plow frame behind the shank and replaced it with an angle-iron frame. The frame mounts to the backside of the plow shank. At its rear, two packer wheels from an old horse drawn planter provide support and pack the dirt to either side of the freshly planted rootstock.

"I put a shaft through the two packer wheels and mounted it to the frame with a couple of

pillow-box bearings," says Fredrickson.

He mounted a plank for a seat just ahead of the packer wheels. An open top box mounts over the plow shank. The rear side is beveled to provide the rider with ready access to rootstock. The box was recycled from clothes lockers once used by iron mine workers in the area.

Two steel panels mounted at angles to the frame gather dirt from behind the shovel plow and pull it back in around the planted stem where it's packed by the rear wheels.

"The plants are easy to grab and drop in the furrow behind the shovel plow, and the planter does the rest," says Fredrickson. "The hand levers on each front wheel make it easy to set the planting depth."

The plow even lets Fredrickson know how often to drop plants needing spacing. He mounts a spring clip to one of the packing wheel rungs. As the wheel revolves, the clip strikes a stopper on the frame.

"If I want more space, the clip is mounted farther out on the rung," explains Fredrickson. "I just move it toward the center for shorter



Bob Fredrickson converted a 1940's vintage, one-bottom plow into this slick berry planter. Wooden plank seat mounts just ahead of plow's packer wheels.

spacings."

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Compact Gas-Powered Post Driver

The Ultra-Driver, a new 34-lb., gas powered post driver from Skidrill is fitted with a new fuel efficient, low emissions engine.

"The G30D delivers 1 1/2 ft./lbs. per engine cc, which is double what has been available before," says Mark Salman, general manager, Skidrill. "Earlier stand-alone power drivers didn't have this level of impact."

The G30D has a post-leveling device built into it and only four moving parts. The four-cycle Overhead Valve (OHV) engine is modular and easily replaceable. Fuel efficient, it burns less than a quart of fuel an hour while delivering 1,100 blows per minute. Air cushion dampening reduces operator fatigue.

The 22-in. length makes it easy to lift up and over a T-post or round pipes up to 2-in. dia. The G30D is priced at \$2,100.

A multi-purpose G30E from Skidrill is not as convenient, but offers more uses. Heavier, at more than 50 lbs., and longer, the G30E can be outfitted as a post driver, breaker point or tamper with different accessories. The base price on it is \$2,600.

"If you are driving posts in rocky ground, it's handy," says Salman. "Drop the driver head and replace it with the breaker point. Toss the rock out of the way and resume driving. If you're putting in a corner post, you can use the tamper to firm up the dirt."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ultra-



Ultra-Driver gas-powered post driver burns less than a quart of fuel per hour while delivering 1,100 blows per minute.

Driver, P.O. Box 8041, Greensboro, N.C. 27419 (ph 800 843-3745; info@skidrill.com; www.ultradriver.com).



Bale fork uses 5-ft. long steel pipes supporting 8-in. long solid steel spindles ground down to a point (left). Bucket teeth were made out of truck leaf springs.



Spindles And Springs Turned Into Bale Forks, Bucket Teeth

Axle spindles from old mobile homes can be used to make inexpensive, loader-mounted round bale forks, says Brenden Janssen, Vega, Alta., noting that other types of axles would also work.

His bale fork consists of a pair of 5-ft. long, 2 7/8-in. dia. steel pipes that support cut-down, 8-in. long solid steel spindles. The spindles are ground down to a point, then inserted into the pipes and welded on. The back end of each pipe is inserted into a home-built frame that quick-tatches to the tractor's front-end loader. The entire unit is raised and lowered by a pair of hydraulic cylinders.

"I use it on my Deere 280 front-end tractor. It really works good," says Janssen. "I don't stab the bale with the forks. Instead, I slide the teeth under the bale. The solid steel spindles won't wear through from sliding on the

ground. I used a chapsaw to cut the spindles down."

Another idea that works well for Janssen is using truck leaf springs to make inexpensive, heavy-duty steel teeth that bolt onto his loader bucket. The springs are 5/8 in. thick by 4 in. wide and spaced about 12 in. apart on the lip of the bucket, with the curvature of the spring facing down. He simply drills holes in each spring and in the bucket and bolts it on.

"The teeth come in handy because they can get under the load, whereas the bucket by itself will often slip off. Also, they're built strong so I can root around in ice and concrete and they won't bend," says Janssen.

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