

Designed for small market farmers, sprayer has a 24-ft. boom on just one side which simplifies application of fungicides, insecticides and foliar fertilizer.



One-Sided Boom Ideal For Smaller Farms

Small and medium-sized market farmers don't have to spend a lot of money for a durable and efficient sprayer, says Benjamin Oberholtzer. As a vegetable farmer he knew what he needed when he made his first boom sprayer. More than 20 years later he and his sons manufacture them for others at their company, Penns Creek Welding & Manufacturing in Winfield, Penn.

"With vegetable spraying, you want complete coverage and you need high pressure. Our sprayer goes up to 200-plus psi," Oberholtzer says.

The 24-ft. boom on just one side simplifies application of fungicides, insecticides and foliar feed fertilizer. With the boom on the inside of the field, the operator doesn't have to lift the boom when he comes to the end of the field. And with a reach of 25 to 30 ft., drive rows can be 50 to 60 ft. apart, leaving more room for growing crops. With hydraulic leveling, the sprayer can be set at 2 ft. for vine plants and up to 7 1/2 ft. for sweet corn.

The sprayer requires a tractor with 30 to 60 hp. and a remote hydraulic. The operator manually folds the boom and sets the height. Costs range from \$3,690 to \$4,490 for trailer sprayers with 200, 300 and 400-gal. tanks.

This year, Penns Creek offers a fully hydraulic 400-gal. tank sprayer that can be operated completely from the tractor seat for \$7,800.

All the sprayers are pump-driven with a pto power shaft, and have rubber shock absorbing mounting so the boom is stable.



With the boom on the inside of the field, the operator doesn't have to lift the boom when he comes to end of field.

Frames have 3 paint coats including a topcoat with a hardener for a durable finish.

Oberholtzer says he stresses service. He and his sons deliver most of the units personally in the Northeast, but sprayers have been shipped to the Midwest, Southeast, and one was crated and sent to Hawaii. Penns Creek ships replacement parts overnight to minimize down time for growers.

"Our goal is to build a simple, durable, dependable sprayer that does the job without a lot of money," Oberholtzer says. "This sprayer is universal for most crops."

To see it in operation, check out the video on the Penns Creek website.

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Fertilizer Spreader Built From Old Fire Truck

"I looked for an old fire truck for quite a few years because I knew it would make a real nice running gear for a fertilizer spreader," says Michigan farmer Chuck Timm. "I finally found an old pumper truck on a 500 Ford chassis."

Timm brought the truck back to his shop and spent about two months creating his one-of-a-kind fertilizer rig. First he removed the pumping equipment and sold it to a neighbor for \$500. Then he dismantled the drive train, suspension and wheels to accommodate flotation tires. "I built rear wheels for the extra large Terra tires that I acquired from an old 3-wheel self-propelled fertilizer spreader," says Timm. "Then I re-built the drive train and suspension to mount the over-sized wheels." On the front he added 7-in. blocks to level the frame, and built new wheels for the high flotation 385/65R22.5 steering tires.

Timm bought a stainless steel 3-ton fertilizer box from an old pull-type spreader, scrapped out the running gear, and mounted the box on the truck chassis. Fertilizer is metered out by the truck pto and a ground drive wheel that he raises and lowers with a hydraulic cylinder. The spinner is driven by a 5 hp. Honda motor.

"The spinner is set up to give me a 60-ft. swath," says Timm. "and I use GPS in the cab to show me the right amount of overlap. I can travel 10 to 11 mph with a full load, which is a



Michigan farmer Chuck Timm built this fertilizer spreader from an old fire truck, rebuilding the drivetrain and suspension to accommodate flotation tires on back.

decent speed if fields aren't entirely smooth."

Timm says the 500 Ford has a 330 cu. in. engine with a large manifold for extra cooling. "It's a little underpowered for the size tank we have, but we're not out to set speed records. We can cover a good 40 acres an hour, and with the large tires and just a 3-ton tank, we're not compacting the soil, which is important."

Timm says he spent about \$5,000 in out-of-pocket costs for the spreader, which included buying the truck, fertilizer tank, 4 tires and the GPS. "Even with two months of labor on top of those costs, I've got way less into this than buying a truck-mounted commercial spreader," says Timm.

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When Alan Shelbourn added a second floor to his house, he built catwalks to make it easy to clean out gutters. The walkways connect to a large deck at one end of his house and the garage at the other.

Catwalks Make It Easy To Clean Gutters

When Alan Shelbourn added a second floor to his house, he built catwalks onto second floor walkways to make it easy to clean out the gutters. The walkways connect to a large deck on one end of his house and a garage on the other.

"The catwalks blend into the walkways," explains Shelbourn.

Initially Shelbourn and his wife built a one level home using lumber milled from trees on their thickly forested site. When they later added a second floor, he quickly found climbing a ladder to clean fir tree needles out of rain gutters was a pain. He decided permanent catwalks would make the job easier and safer, especially as he was getting older.

Shelbourn used 14-ft., 4 by 6 treated posts for uprights supporting the walkways. He set them on concrete pads at ground level and at a 3 1/2-ft. distance from the house wall. He connected the uprights to the house wall with 2 by 6 treated boards that also support the walkways. He connected the catwalks to the outside of the uprights.

"The catwalks are about 3 ft. above the

level of the walkways, and like them, are supported by 2 by 6 boards on edge," says Shelbourn. "I also used treated 2 by 6's for the deck boards of both the walkways and catwalks."

The catwalks' support boards are bolted to the 14-ft. uprights. Cables stretch from the ends of the support boards to the tops of the uprights. Turnbuckles on the upright end let Shelbourn maintain taut cables.

"Working on the catwalks requires stepping over the cables," says Shelbourn. "That is still safer and easier than climbing ladders. I ran cables along the top of the uprights and use a safety harness when on the catwalk. I just detach and reattach as I move from one section to the next."

"We added picket fence boards along the walkway to let our dog have outside access," says Shelbourn. "With all of it stained red like the house, everything blends together at a distance."

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Richard Tice spent less than \$50 to put together this battery-powered "lay down" cart for picking strawberries.



Electric-Powered Strawberry Picker

Retired Pennsylvania farmer Richard Tice loves strawberries, but finds it difficult to kneel down and bend over to pick them. "One day I just figured it would be a lot easier to lay down and pick berries," says Tice, "so I built a platform on wheels that lets me do that."

"Those commercial pickers probably cost \$3,000 or more," Tice says. "My device is a lot simpler, and I probably have less than \$50 total invested, including labor."

Tice first built a frame about 6 ft. wide and 6 ft. long from 1 in. square metal tubing. On one end of the platform he made supports where he mounted two wheels from an old garden tractor on a 1/2-in. drive shaft. The wheels are mounted wide enough apart to straddle a 6 ft. wide row of berries. On the front he has a single wheel for steering. The top of the platform is about 18 in. off the ground, so when Tice lays on it he can easily reach down and pick the berries.

His picking platform is propelled by a small electric motor that Tice pulled from

an old dump truck. "The motor was used to roll and unroll a heavy tarp," Tice says. He mounted the motor with its sprocket drive in line with a sprocket connected to the left rear wheel. An old bicycle drive chain connects the two sprockets. Power to drive the motor and move the platform comes from a deep cycle 12-volt battery.

"Whenever I need to move I flip the power switch to the battery and the platform just creeps along," Tice says. "The tarp drive motor was geared way down so it slowly moves the platform forward or backward. It sure beats bending over and having to crawl on my hands and knees in the berry patch."

Tice says the battery has enough juice to drive the platform up and down his berry patch for a few days, then he drives it back to the shop and recharges the battery.

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