

Home-Built Devices Keep Pond Weed-Free

Gary Miller, Peru, Ind., wanted to control the weeds in his 1 1/2-acre pond without using chemicals. So he invented 3 tools that let him do that.

Electric Mowing Scythe

It consists of an electric hedge trimmer, which he bought used, mounted on an old scythe. He cut the scythe's blade in half and used hose clamps to secure the body of the hedge trimmer to the remaining part of the blade. The hedge trimmer came equipped with a plug-in outlet. He plugged a 4-ft. long cord into it and runs a 100-ft. long extension cord from it to a generator that's mounted on a trailer.

"It's fairly efficient and can mow larger plants than an ordinary weedeater," says Miller. "I go all the way around the pond with it cutting down young willow trees. It leaves the edge of the pond looking real neat.

"I can also use it to cut weeds off under the water as long as the trimmer's motor stays above water. I cut in both directions as I swing the scythe back and forth. If I want to use the hedge trimmer on land, I just unclamp the hedge trimmer from the scythe."



Miller mounted an electric hedge trimmer on an old scythe.



Mounted on front of a trolling boat, this 10-ft. wide "top rake" floats on the water to skim weeds off pond's surface.

10-ft. Wide "Top Rake"

His 10-ft. wide "top rake" is designed to mount on front of a 12-ft. trolling boat. Made from wood, it floats on the water to skim weeds off the pond's surface.

The rake consists of a 10-ft. long treated 2 by 4 with pole barn spikes spaced 2 in. apart. It's supported by a pair of wooden arms attached to a 1-in. dia. pipe. The pipe runs through holes in the arms and is held in place by hose clamps. No modifications were made to the boat.

A length of 2-in. sq. aluminum tubing is used to raise and lower the rake, by means of an anchor winch and rope mounted on back

of the boat. The pipe and tubing are held in place with a ratchet strap fastened to a cross brace on the boat's floor. The rope passes through an eyelet on back of the tubing and through a pulley on front. The operator cranks the winch to let the rope out or bring it back in.

"I drop the rake and pull weeds away from shore as I back the boat up into clear water," says Miller. "Then I lift the rake out of the water, drive the boat behind the pulled-out weeds, drop the rake and push the weeds toward shore."

6-ft. Wide "Bottom Rake"

He uses a 6-ft. wide "bottom rake" with his Cub Cadet garden tractor to get rid of weeds at the bottom of the pond. The rake teeth - nine 1/2 by 10-in. grade 8 studs - are welded to a 6-ft. long metal sign. A 3-ft. length of 1 1/4-in. dia. pipe is welded to the center of the post and supported by 1/2-in. dia. rebar. A U-shaped rod welded to the end of the pipe forms a hitch.

A 200-ft. long rope is used to attach the rake to the garden tractor. Miller then places the rake upright on front of his boat and backs it out into the water until there's no more slack in the rope, and the rake is dropped to the bottom of the pond. The tractor driver then pulls the rake toward shore. Once



Miller uses his Cub Cadet garden tractor to pull this 6-ft. wide "bottom rake" across bottom of pond.

the rake has reached shore, the weeds are removed and the process starts all over again.

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Stephen Brubaker used an upright freezer and kitchen sink to make this freeze-proof waterer. A kitchen sink mounts in the freezer door, which opens to the top.



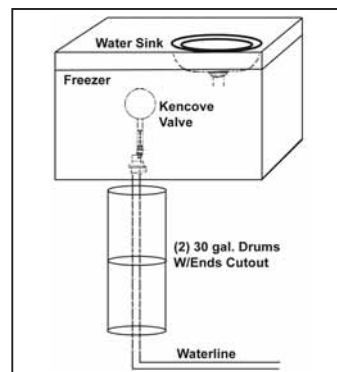
Frost-Proof Waterer Made From Freezer, Sink

"I got this idea after seeing a story in FARM SHOW a couple years ago about the Kencove underwater float valve (ph 800 418-6631; www.kencove.com)," says Stephen Brubaker, Oconto, Wis., who used an upright freezer and kitchen sink to make a freeze-proof waterer.

The water line is buried 6 ft. deep and comes up through a hole in the bottom of the freezer, which lays flat on the ground. A kitchen sink mounts in the door of the freezer, which opens to the top. When the freezer fills up with water, it enters the sink through the drain.

The Kencove float valve is designed to be installed under water, at the bottom of a waterer. Brubaker buried two 30-gal. drums under the freezer, one mounted on top of the other with the ends cut out of them. The water line, which is also wrapped with insulation, runs up through the empty drums.

"It saved us the cost of an expensive frost-proof waterer, and it has worked great for the past two winters. Because the cattle drink out of the sink, it tends to stay ice-free because it's a small area. If it freezes up, you just



Kencove float valve is installed at bottom of waterer. Brubaker buried two 30-gal. drums under freezer, with the ends cut out, and the water line runs up through them.

have to break up the ice in the small area," says Brubaker.

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Frost-Proof Waterer Built With Burial Vault

Minnesota hobby farmer Ray Rivard came up with a unique way to make a frost-free waterer for his horses. He used a 2,000-lb. concrete burial vault for the base of his Ritchie waterer. He didn't have to go to the nearest mortuary and order a vault, because he already had several in his possession.

"There aren't a lot of people who happen to own a vault-placing trailer and a supply of vaults, but I do," says Rivard with a laugh. "Several years ago I was going to get into that business and bought the trailer and a few vaults to get started. One thing led to another and although the business never got off the ground, I kept the equipment."

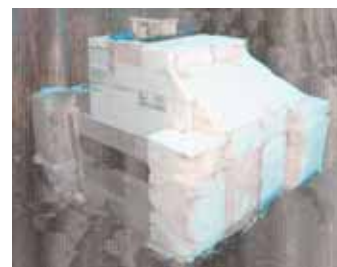
A few years went by and when he decided his wife's horses needed a heated waterer, he figured using one of the vaults as a base was a good idea. "I dug the water line in about 8 ft. deep to the watering site, then dug a hole big enough to bury a vault on end," Rivard says. "Then I ran the water line up through the vault and put insulation around it inside the vault to keep it from freezing. A faucet near the inside top of the vault turns the water supply on and off. One end of the vault protrudes about a foot above ground level and provides a sturdy base for the waterer."

Instead of using the concrete cover, which weighs 700 lbs., Rivard made a cover out of treated plywood so he could install the pipe, insulate it and cover the side without dealing with a 700-lb. weight.

Rivard says the water line through the insulated vault has never frozen, but the extra-cold winter of 2013-2014 did freeze the waterer above ground. "I probably should've had the waterer on the south side



Ray Rivard buried a 2,000-lb. concrete burial vault on end in the ground to form the base for his Ritchie waterer. A water line runs up through the vault, which is insulated to keep it from freezing. Faucet near top of vault turns water supply on and off.



of the building rather than on the north side where the wind hits it," Rivard says as an afterthought, "but we put a 100-watt bulb in the cabinet when it gets 20 below and that keeps it warm enough so it doesn't freeze."

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