Tire Hothouses Help Start Plants Early

Bud Bullard of Sigurd, Utah, says you can use old tires to create mini hothouses to get an early start on your garden.

He has access to front-end loader and rock truck tires and uses a reciprocating saw to cut the tops back to the tread to maximize space. But any size tire works, he says.

Depending on the weather, he fills them with vegetable plants in March or April, waters them well and covers the top of the tire with Plexiglas.

"Condensation will build up if the top of the tire opening is completely covered," Bullard says. The extra moisture is helpful especially when the plants are young.

He waters whenever the plants look droopy and monitors the temperature carefully.

"As the days warm up, prop the glass up with a brick or stick during the day. At night, let the glass back down," he says. "When the chance of frost has passed, remove the glass and enjoy neighbor envy as they see how thick and hearty your plants look."

Bullard says he has planted in tire hothouses for 20 years and planted a variety of vegetables including peppers, squash and tomatoes. He plants 6 to 8 tomato plants in the largest tires and likes to plant squash in smaller tires.

Besides starting plants early, the tires extend the season, Bullard notes. When frost threatens he covers the plants with the Plexiglas.

He keeps the soil in the tires over the winter and adds fertilizer and turkey mulch (sawdust and turkey manure) in the spring before planting.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bud Bullard, P.O. Box 570071, Sigurd, Utah 84657 (ph 435 896-8324).

Old tires can be used to create mini hothouses to start plants early, says Bud Ballard. He fills tire with vegetable plants in early spring, then covers the top with Plexiglas.

Reusable Sacks An Easy Way To Garden

With a SackGarden you can have a mobile garden that allows you to grow food just about anywhere, says Hong Park. The Huntsville, Ala., retail greenhouse owner and inventor (featured in FARM SHOW, Vol. 37, No. 4 with his Air Propagator) has been developing the patented, reusable sacks for the past five years. The SackGarden is affordable starting at $9.95 for three sacks (8-in.) or $19.95 for a three-sack kit with weed barrier and pipe.

Some gardeners have already been planting directly into bags of potting soil that are laid on the ground and cut open. Park says his sacks are sturdier, last longer (up to 4 or 5 years) and are easier to water and maintain. Plus they come with heavy-duty plastic handles that make it easy to move them.

"Vegetables do well in them and we've had strawberries growing in the same sacks for 3 years and they're still going strong," Park says.

The stretchable geo sacks are tubes secured with a zip tie and carrying handle on one end. Once it is filled with soil, another zip tie and handle close off the other end. You cut small holes in the top to plant seedlings.

The smallest sacks are 8 in. dia., 3 ft. long and weigh about 35 lbs. with soil that has been watered. They're ideal for herbs and greens and shallow-rooted flowers and vegetables. The largest sacks are 15-in. by 4-ft. and are large enough to grow crops such as corn and beans.

Because the bags are permeable, they can be set up with sprinkler or drip watering systems, Park says. Fertilizer can also be added to the bags when filled with soil and throughout the season.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hong Park, 13605 Memorial Parkway S.W., Huntsville, Ala. 35803 (ph 256 650-4644 or 256 533-6700; www.sackgarden.com).

SackGarden lets you plant directly into sturdy bags that are filled with potting soil, then laid on the ground and cut open.

"Vegetables do well in them and we've had strawberries growing in the same sacks for 3 years," says inventor Hong Park.

A Coffee Maker You Can Take To Work

This COFFEEBOXX is designed to take to job sites or to the field. It operates on 120-volt power and works with single serve coffee pods.

COFFEEBOXX has an impact-resistant shell and a crush-proof core that can withstand a 1,500-lb. load.

The unit has a 3-ft. long retractable cord and a rubberized handle. It weighs 12 lbs. empty and has an impact-resistant shell and a crush-proof core that can withstand a 1,500-lb. load, says the company. Large sealed buttons allow you to make coffee while wearing gloves. Six external stainless steel tie-downs make it easy to strap the COFFEEBOXX into place if you're driving on a bumpy road.

The unit comes with a 2 1/2-liter, spill-proof water tank that lets you make up to 10 cups of coffee before refilling. You press a button to select your cup size - 8, 10, or 12 oz.

The COFFEEBOXX has a hot water line that's separate from the coffee, so you can pop a teabag, hot cocoa mix, or a pack of instant noodles or even oatmeal directly into the cup without worrying about any residual coffee taste.

The Coffeeboxx sells for $249.99 plus S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, (OXX, Inc., ph 866 233-4714; www.oxx.com).

Wooden stool has a hinged wing on each side. Person getting into van sits down on stool and slides over to van seat. Stool is then pulled away. If the person can't stand, wing on other side of stool is placed on wheelchair and person slides all the way across.

Stool Puts Disabled Man In Van Seat

Bill Weicker, Plattsville, Ontario, needed a way to get his father into his van without needing help from anyone else. Fortunately, an Amish furniture maker's work gave his father a lift, both physically and mentally.

"About 5 years ago my father went through a serious skin cancer operation on his face," says Weicker. "After radiation he was very weak. He could stand, but he couldn't walk. We looked at ways to get my father in and out of his van. I didn't want to spend the money for a specially-designed van, but I did have the idea to build an adjustable stool with hinged wings.

"I took the idea to an Amish furniture maker who is deaf. Through his wife using hand signs, the man was able to build this wooden stool on the first try for less than $100. Amazing!"

The 4-legged stool is made of solid pine and has a long hinged wing on each side. By pulling a pin, the operator can adjust the stool's height to the level of the van seat.

"The pin slides into a hole in the stool's main frame. One of the wings is then raised and placed on the car seat," explains Weicker. "The person getting into the van sits down on the stool and then slides over to the van seat. The stool is then pulled away from the seat, and the wing automatically drops to the side. If the disabled person can't stand, then the wing on the other side of the stool is placed on the wheelchair and the person slides all the way across to the seat."

Weicker says they've used the stool for 4 years. "It works amazingly well. We also have another stool like this one in the bathroom. We have a lift for my father to use in his whirlpool bath, and we use the stool to transfer him from the stool to the bath lift.

"My Amish friend tells me he could build the stool with caster wheels to use in nursing homes. This stool design is something that's brand new, and I wanted to give it a long test run before I considered offering it to the public. It has passed the test of time with flying colors."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bill Weicker, RR 1, Oxford-Waterloo Road, 966584 – Plattsville, Ontario, Canada N0J 1S0 (ph 519 662-2316).

One end of transparent hose is attached to pressure cooker and other end to a fluid shut-off valve fastened to a metal stand. Turning the valve releases liquid into jar.

Pressure Cooker "Safety Valve"

"I've been making this safety gadget for pressure cookers for a few years and thought your readers could benefit from it," says David Weaver, Mio, Mich.

"Women often use steamers to make grape juice, apple juice, etc. Once it's done cooking, the juice is steaming hot and the steamers come with only a small wire clip to pinch the hose to stop the flow. The hose and clip all become very hot. Using gloves or pot holders to fill jars isn't exactly safe, and you have to be careful not to get burned.

"I came up with a free standing system that can be set inside a pan, so if a jar ever breaks all of its contents will be contained."

The system uses a long transparent plastic hose, attached at one end to the pressure cooker and at the other end to a fluid shut-off valve. The valve is fastened to the top of a tall metal stand welded to a 5-in. sq., 3/8-in. thick base for stability. The jar to be filled sets on the stand underneath the hose. Turning the valve releases the liquid into the jar.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, David Weaver, 223 E. Kittle Rd., Mio, Mich. 48647 (ph 989 848-7510).