

Do-It-Yourself Stills For Alcohol, Essential Oils

You can make your own brandy, vodka or whiskey -- as well as essential oils for flavoring and scents -- with a wide range of stills from Rainier Distillers. With sizes ranging from do-it-yourself home models up to larger commercial units, Anthony Zaca says demand for stills has been growing rapidly, especially for home-sized units.

Zaca notes that once alcohol has been distilled from a mash, it can be used for everything from drinking to fuel for cooking or transport. He describes distilled spirits as a liquid asset with a ready market. However, in the U.S. it's heavily regulated.

Alcohol distillation is taxed and regulated by the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau. Use of a still for alcohol for home fuel use requires a permit, but is not subject to a tax. Stills with capacity of a gallon or less can be used without permits or tax for water distillation and production of essential oils through steam or water extraction.

Legally producing alcohol with stills requires qualifying as a distilled spirits plant. Commercial craft or micro-distilleries have been popping up all over the country producing regional spirits. The American Distilling Institute says the number has risen dramatically from just 50 in 2005 to the hundreds now in existence across the country.

The company's stills are all handmade using traditional copper components. Most are custom-designed for commercial operations. However, he also sells component parts, kits and ready-to-go

systems for both pot and tower stills.

The Alchemist is Zaca's flagship line of ready-made stills for micro-distillers. It comes in 2, 3 and 4-in. sizes. The 2-in. Alchemist with a 15-gal. boiler and distillation tower will produce a gallon of 75 to 80 percent alcohol an hour or a liter of 92% alcohol per hour, which is the minimum needed for cooking or transport fuel. It's priced at \$655.

Although all the stills can be used for essential oil production, Zaca also makes a still designed specifically for that purpose. It can hold 6 to 7 lbs. of herbs, flowers or other plants.

"Regardless what you want to distill, it's simple," says Zaca. "If you can do pressure cooking, it's the same principle."

For those interested in the booming cannabis industry, Zaca's Witch Herbal Extractor should be on your radar. With The Witch, you can make cannabis oils using a safe, easy, alcohol-based extraction rather than a hazardous butane-based one. At a modest \$1500, the product is perfect for folks who want to make great oils using natural methods but have been put off by higher-priced, butane-based extractors. And as the countless medicinal properties of marijuana are revealed and accepted, a DIY option for cannabis oil could prove to be indispensable.

Zaca's vast library of instructional and demonstrative content (including hundreds of self-published YouTube videos, Ustream classes, and written articles) ensures no lack of information or learning resources for these products. This allows interested



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customers the option of becoming intimately familiar with Rainier Distiller's products prior to purchase, and provides the curious a way to learn a wide variety of distillation and oilmaking techniques.

He warns readers that handmade copper stills require a minimum of 4 weeks for delivery.

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Reader Inquiry No. 21

Loader-Mounted Mower Makes Roadside Trimming Easy

Mowing steep roadsides is not a problem for James Rohr, Navarre, Ohio, who made a side-mount mower hitch that carries a 22-in. wide push mower about 10 ft. out to the side of the bucket on his loader tractor.

"It's simple to use and results in a nice, even cut," he says. "I use it to mow the steep banks along a road next to my property. Using the loader I can see what I'm doing without having to turn around. I can raise or lower the loader and also tilt it up or down to adjust the position of the mower."

He left the handle on the mower and attached metal plates to the front and back of

the deck. Chains run from the plates up to a short crossbar on the end of the telescoping pipe. The base of the pipe fits over one of the bale spears on the loader and it rests on top of another one. The chains attached to the mower deck allow it to roll easily over uneven ground.

"I've been using this method to mow roadsides for more than 13 years and I can't think of any way to improve it," says Rohr. "I can set it up for use in only about 7 min."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, James Rohr, 3845 Alabama Ave. S.W., Navarre, Ohio 44662.



Side-mount hitch carries a 22-in. wide push mower about 10 ft. beyond the bucket on James Rohr's loader tractor. Chains attached to mower deck allow it to roll easily over uneven ground.