

These Tire Planters Look Like Pottery

FARM SHOW reader Roy Manfredi recently wrote to tell us about tire planters created by Amy Atwater and her business partner, Pat Garrett, saying that the painted planters are as beautiful as they are functional.

"We've taken the design process to a new level," Atwater says. "At art shows some people think they are pottery when they first see them."

The venture started accidentally when the couple decided to do something with four old tires Garrett had taken off his pickup. He used "brute strength" to turn them inside out and cut in a design with a sharp knife. After cleaning them thoroughly, Atwater painted them. Others noticed and asked if the couple could make more, and they've been making tire planters ever since.

The artists sell them online and at their shop, 8725 UpCycled Arts, located in Raton, N. Mex., which is located at the intersection of Hwys. 87 and 25 in the northeast corner of the state.

Between Garrett's precise cutting and painting, and Atwater's painting and eye for color and design, they continually come up with new designs and customize according to clients' wishes.

"We do everything from the smallest riding lawn mower to pickup tires. But our favorites are golf cart tires," Atwater says. They have local sources that provide plenty of free tires. It saves the businesses disposal fees and keeps the tires out of landfills.

Atwater explains that in their area the soil is poor and the growing season short. The tire planters can be filled with good soil, and they keep plants warm and hold moisture. Customers grow a variety of things in them including vegetables, flowers and cactuses.

Prices vary according to size and design, starting at \$15 for unpainted small tires to \$125 for large tires with custom designs. Quality primer, automotive and acrylic paints are used.

The recycle artists also make hose winders, dog beds, and toy storage units out of tires. They recycle other items as well, including empty shotgun shell cases, which they



Painted tire planters created by Amy Atwater and business partner Pat Garrett, are as beautiful as they are functional.



"At art shows some people think our tire planters are pottery when they first see them," says Atwater.



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transform into strings of lights. Their work as well as other recycled artists' work can be purchased at their Raton, N.M. store and seen on their Facebook page.

They also ship items, including the tire planters.

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Metal Roses Have Barbed Wire Stems

Old barbed wire is one thing fifth generation rancher and farmer Shawn Barber has plenty of. And the young entrepreneur has found a way to use it to make rustic metal roses.

The South Dakota rancher was inspired by a display in a western décor booth at a stock show that used barbed wire for the stems of metal roses. Barber decided to make his own roses for a special friend on Valentine's Day. Friends saw them and asked him to make roses for them to give as gifts. Three years later, Barber has made more than 2,000 roses. While the barbed wire stems make them interesting, Barber's color options are what sets his metal roses apart.

He credits the quality color to his education and experience in collision repair and body shop work. His father had a repair shop on the farm and taught Barber how to MIG weld when he was young. Barber later took a semester of welding as part of an auto body repair program. Circumstances brought him back to help with the family's cow/calf ranch several years ago. The roses provide a way to combine his painting, welding and other skills with the ranch's barbed wire.

While his first roses were completely handmade with sheet metal and a tin snips, Barber now has a local business laser-cut his four-part petals out of 22-ga. metal sheets. Using pliers, he bends and curls four of them with needle nose pliers to create each rose, and pop-rivets them together through a hole in the center of the base. He welds the barbed wire stem to the steel rivet.

Finished roses are sandblasted, primed, then painted and coated with two coats of clear acrylic. Barber uses automotive primer and other quality paints.

"I am very particular on the finishing," Barber says. "The vast array of colors is what catches people's eyes."

While red is popular, so is purple and turquoise. John Deere collectors appreciate the green and yellow roses. Barber offers custom colors for people who want to match wedding and anniversary colors (for an extra fee). Some roses have even been buried with loved ones.

For customers who like "antique" roses, Barber rusts them slightly with a bleach/vinegar/water solution. Prices start at \$30/each for unpainted steel roses. Painted roses sell for \$35 each. He reduces the price by \$5/rose for orders of five or more.

For extra special roses that are hydro-dipped or powder-coated, the cost is \$45/each. Barber contracts out that work.

As with most artists, he is exploring new ideas to add to his product line. His roses under glass (with a Beauty and the Beast theme) are proving to be popular, and he welds up vases to hold the roses.

Barber notes that the busy time for orders



Shawn Barber started making colorful metal roses for a friend on Valentine's Day.



He credits the color quality to his education and experience in collision repair and body shop work.

usually comes during slower times on the ranch – before Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Christmas, etc. During calving, and haying and harvest seasons, it takes longer to fill orders.

"It's just me doing it – taking orders on the phone or through my website and Facebook," he says. "It's been a great journey and a lot of fun. I would have never thought something so small could have turned out to be such a big thing."

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Old Deere Tractor At Home On Silo Top

Drive by Bill Munyon's farm near Momence, Ill., and you'll see a most unusual sight - a 1940's Deere G 2-cyl. tractor mounted on top of a 30-ft. silo.

The silo tractor stands in Munyon's farmyard next to a busy road on the edge of town. The landmark is easily visible as cars travel by.

"I came up with the idea because I like to have fun, and it has certainly provided that," says Munyon. "It has been shown on the RFD-TV channel several times, and for a while it appeared on billboards along a local interstate highway. Over the years we've watched many cars slow down and point. Many drivers stop and take pictures."

Munyon, who says his motto is "Collector of fine junk since 1934 - I buy but do not sell", put the tractor in place back in 1992. "I bought the tractor used and drove it for a while until the engine went bad. I didn't want to spend the money to fix it, but I didn't want to junk it either."

He gave the old Deere a good paint job. "It had to look nice up there where everyone can see it," he says.

Next he had a large crane lift the tractor into place.

The tractor is chained down and also secured with cables at several places to the silo's roof. "I took the air out of the tires so the tractor can't roll. Heavy winds have come



Bill Munyon mounted an old Deere G 2-cyl. tractor on top of this 30-ft. silo for all to see.

through several times over the years, but we've never had a problem," notes Munyon.

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