



Leland Heuchert made this storage shed mostly from used bin parts. He assembled 3 rings and a roof from a 19-ft. bin, then installed a used door purchased online.



He uses a crane to dismantle bins and then hauls the parts home.

Old Grain Bins Make Great Storage Sheds, Cheap Bulk Storage

The Heuchert farm in Saskatoon, Sask. recently added inexpensive storage bins, thanks to an idea Leland Heuchert discovered on a website.

"We had a bunch of bin parts kicking around, and on Pinterest I saw a grain bin fitted with a home door," he says.

He assembled three rings and a roof from a 19-ft. grain bin. Then Heuchert installed a used door purchased off Kijiji (Canada's version of Craigslist).

"We had issues with the grain bin being too flexible so we put angle iron around the door frame inside the bin," says Heuchert.

The Heucherts later built 3 more storage bins but used grain bin doors, which were easier to install. They will likely be changed to home doors in the future, because they are bigger and make it easier to haul things through, Heuchert says.

"I recommend building these bins on

cement or steel floors because wood doesn't last as long," he adds.

With many large farms in the area getting rid of small bins, they are cheap and often free for the taking. The Heucherts dismantle them with a crane and haul the parts home. They usually add a couple bins for their own grain storage every year.

The bins that keep grain dry and rodent-proof work just as well to protect aeration fans, equipment parts, tires and other farm items, Heuchert says. Plus they provide a fairly large storage area. For example, the 19-ft. diameter bin provides about 285 sq. ft. of space, fairly close to a 40-ft. shipping container that has 320 sq. ft. In the future, the Heucherts plan to add shelves to make even better use of the space.

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Two years ago Heuchert built 7 bulk bins from used bin parts. Photo at left shows the inside of one of his storage sheds.

Mower Converted To Trim Fencelines

Keeping fence lines trimmed up neat is easy for Illinois farmer B.J. Schild since he built a loader-mounted mower that reaches under low lying fence wires. It mounts on a quick-tach mounting plate on his Massey Ferguson 45 hp. tractor.

"I built it mostly out of an old walk-behind mower. It saves hours of work. I have to go slow, but it sure beats using a handheld weed trimmer like I had been doing," says Schild.

He stripped the walk-behind mower down to the engine, frame, wheel mounts, and 20-in. mower blade assembly, which uses 3-in. sickle sections mounted within a circular metal guard. The engine was worn out so he replaced it with a hydraulic pump that belt-drives the mower. A pair of small anti-scalp caster wheels allows the deck to follow the ground contour.

A pair of pillow block bearings mounted on a horizontal shaft allow the mower to pivot up or down, and a single bearing on a vertical shaft lets it pivot sideways.

"I use it to clear away weeds and brush from fence lines separating my cattle pastures. It'll cut brush up to 1/2 in. dia.," says Schild. "It reaches right under fence lines, automatically gliding around the posts. All I do is drive my tractor along the fence and the mower does all the work. A pair of garage door springs attached to the mower's mounting frame pulls the mower back forward after passing a post.

"If I want I can still use the belt tightener that came with the walk-behind mower to tighten the belt on the hydraulic pump. To detach the mower I just pull 2 levers on the quick-tach plate."

Schild already had most of the materials used to build the mower, which kept his total cost to only about \$150. "All I bought were the quick-tach plate, caster wheels, and belt.



Schild built this fenceline mower out of an old walk-behind mower, stripping it down to the frame, wheel mounts, and 20-in. mower blade assembly.



A hydraulic pump belt-drives the mower in place of the walk-behind mower's engine.

Everything else came from my scrap pile," he notes.

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"Made It Myself" Broccoli Harvester

Former software engineer and now Oregon farmer Ron Pearmine built a custom broccoli harvester from a 42-year-old mechanical bean picker. He got the idea after seeing robotic welding equipment at a manufacturing plant, reasoning that if robots could weld, a machine should also be able to pick broccoli.

His first attempt 5 years ago was far from successful, Pearmine says, but he wasn't deterred. Two years ago he built a new prototype from a 1976 model Chisholm-Ryder bean picker. His plan is to have the machine harvest 80 acres on his farm, and if it works like he thinks it will, other growers may hire him to harvest acreage on their farms.

Pearmine says he built the machine because, like many vegetable farmers these days, he's faced with a labor shortage to harvest his valuable vegetable crop. Hand-picking crews of 20 or more people are usually needed to go across a broccoli field 2 or 3 times to get the most production from

a crop. That labor is expensive because of Oregon's wage laws. Pearmine says his machine can substantially reduce harvesting costs, though it does have the drawback of harvesting all the flowers at once rather than 3 times with hand picking. Still the savings outweigh the negatives. A local processing company says the produce that Pearmine is delivering is as good or better than hand-picked broccoli and that brings a smile to Pearmine's face.

He says it has been a long haul to get the machine to where he wants it, but other growers are excited and the product they're supplying the market is very good. Pearmine says that as recently as 2012 there were more than 2,000 acres of broccoli production in Oregon, but in 2018 that number was closer to 1,000. He hopes his machine will help increase that acreage.

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