

Pallet Maze Perfect Size For Youngsters

A photo of a pallet maze created by Indiana FFA members caught our eye recently. It was less messy to set up than hay bales and easy to assemble and disassemble for the one-day event that Prairie Heights School FFA members host annually, says FFA advisor Ron Noll.

On assembly day, students just “winged” the design with one person directing students how to place the pallets.

“They put steel posts around the perimeter (for support) and screwed and wired as they went,” Noll says. Between 150 and 200 pallets were placed upright to leave 3 to 4-ft. paths, with most leading to dead ends.

“It worked good for the younger kids who were 6 or 7 years old. Their moms and dads could watch them from the outside,” he says. “But some high school kids enjoyed it too.”

The maze was just one of many activities at the Prairie Heights Heritage Festival, which includes music, food, arts and craft vendors, demonstrations, antique tractors, a sawmill, and tractors pulling wagons to shuttle visitors to the grounds.



Indiana FFA members created this pallet maze by placing about 150 pallets upright, leaving 3 to 4-ft. wide paths.

About 40 active FFA members of the school host the event, which has become a popular community activity.

Because the maze is in a yard used as part of the school’s agriculture education, it was disassembled. But students plan to set it up again in a different configuration for the 46th Prairie Heights Heritage Festival set for Oct. 14, 2018.

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FARM SHOW



Bows Made From PVC Pipe

By Klaire Howerton

After shopping for a recurve bow that had an appropriate draw weight for his wife, Caleb Howerton of Springfield, Mo. decided that the best option was to design his own custom bow. That’s exactly what he did – although not with the materials you might think. Caleb’s homemade recurve bows are made with pvc pipe, but you have to look closely to tell.

He started with a 5-ft. length of 1-in. dia. thick-walled pvc pipe, and marked the pipe at 1-ft. intervals and then marked the center at 2 1/2 -ft. Three inches on either side of the center line becomes the handle of the bow. Next, half of the length of pvc was heated until soft and pliable – Caleb used a stove top, but a heat gun can also be used. Once one end of the pvc pipe was heated, he used a 2 1/2 -ft. long jig with two 1-in. screws coming off one end of the board, set at 2 in. apart, to flatten the heated half of the pvc at a taper. This process was repeated on the other half of the pvc.

Once both ends had been heated and tapered, Caleb marked 8 in. from each end. Both 8-in. sections were then reheated until the plastic puffed up. Once heated, the ends were flattened again in the opposite direction. He then traced the shape of the bow’s siyahs (the tips of the bow where the string is mounted) on the flattened ends of the pvc pipe and used a hacksaw to cut along the line, sanding the cuts to make the edges smooth. Once the siyahs were cut and sanded, the cut edges were lightly reheated to draw and seal them together (since the initial cut left a small gap) and then bent forward. Caleb then heated and shaped the handle in the middle of the bow, and followed that step by lightly reheating and bending a curve into each of the bow’s limbs. All of the shaping was done by hand. Using a 3/16-in. drill bit, he cut string holes in the end of each siyahs. Once the bow was shaped, Caleb evaluated it for straightness – any imperfections were lightly reheated and worked out of the bow.

After the heating and shaping, the bow was sanded to remove the glossy pvc finish and any factory and working markings. He then took a stiff wire brush and scoured the pvc pipe to give a wood grain look after staining. Post sanding and scouring, Caleb applied two coats of deep brown wood stain followed by two coats of polyurethane. The result was a beautiful, smooth textured bow with a wood-like pattern brought out by the stain. The finishing touches were a bow string, a hand-sewn leather grip on the handle, and a string silencer made of rabbit fur. The finished product has a 35-pound draw weight, and is perfect for recreational archery and hunting small game.



Caleb Howerton made a recurve bow for his wife out of a 5-ft. length of 1-in. dia. pvc pipe, using his stove top to heat and shape it.



Once half of the pipe was heated, he used a 2 1/2-ft. long jig to flatten it at a taper. The process was then repeated on the other half of the pipe.



He says the finished bow has a 35-lb. draw, perfect for recreational archery and hunting small game.

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Bob Mayes made this giant can crusher out of an old IH stationary hay baler. A 3-ft. long metal pipe about 12 ft. up in the air comes down to crush the can.

He Turned A Stationary Baler Into A Can Crusher

Crushing aluminum cans is a quick and easy job for Bob Mayes, Paradise, Montana, who made a giant can crusher out of an old IH stationary hay baler. He likes to haul it on a trailer to shows and fairs where he demonstrates how it works.

“It’s powered by a 1 1/2 to 2 hp. IH single cyl. gas engine, which mounts on a sliding frame that moves back and forth by turning a crank. I just start the engine and turn the crank to tighten a belt that gets everything going,” says Mayes. “A 3-ft. long metal pipe about 12 ft. up in the air comes down to crush the can. People clap and cheer every time I crush a can, which is about every 50 seconds.”

He bought the stationary baler several years ago with some parts missing. “I couldn’t find the missing parts I needed so I never rebuilt it. I finally decided to make a can crusher out of it and asked my friend Clifford Stephens to help me,” says Mayes.

The baler was originally equipped with a big steel plunger or “compactor arm” designed to pull hay into the bale chamber and then pack it down. Mayes removed the packing assembly at the end of the arm and replaced it with the can-crushing pipe. It’s welded to 4 long metal rods that bolt onto a metal plate, which bolts onto the compactor arm.

The engine belt-drives a shaft that belt-drives a pair of big “teeth wheels” at the top



“People clap and cheer every time I crush a can, which is about every 50 seconds,” says Mayes.

of the baler, which causes the plunger arm to move slowly up and down. Mayes welded a 3 by 4-in. steel plate onto one end of the pipe, and it actually crushes the can.

“Kids laugh and clap their hands every time I crush a can,” says Mayes.

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