



Berbaum stores his collection of antique farm equipment inside this 2,400 sq. ft. shed. Interior walls are covered with reclaimed wood planks from old farm buildings.

Old Machine Shed Houses Amazing Antique Collection

There is an old 1960's steel building on Jim Berbaum's Illinois homestead that isn't anything special on the outside, but inside you'll find 2,400 sq. ft. of history dating back to the late 1800's.

"I love to go on trips and study history," says Berbaum, "and I love to bring it back with me." Inside the shed is where Berbaum spends much of his time keeping antique farm equipment, tools and treasures alive. He began collecting nearly 50 years ago when he acquired a primitive horse-drawn planter and many hand tools that his father had used in the early 1900's.

"It's been a lot of fun through the years, I tell ya," he says with enthusiasm, "and it's great that my wife of 60 years enjoys it, too."

Berbaum's collection has many kinds of stoves, blacksmith tools, a working forge, military memorabilia, along with small and large old farm equipment from auctions and places he's visited. "I never wanted to see all these important pieces just laying in a pile," he says, "You've got to be neat to be neat."

The interior walls of Berbaum's shed are covered with reclaimed wood planks from old farm buildings. "There are lots of 12-in. floorboards that make a nice backing, especially for all my pictures," Berbaum says. He scrubbed the boards and smoothed out the rough spots before installing them. Antiques that he's cleaned and restored cover just about every square foot of those walls.

"We have a lot of picnics here and take a lot of pictures together with friends and family," Berbaum says. "The grandkids love looking at these things and getting rides on the old



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wooden wagons. I pull them with my original Farmall 706 tractor."

In the winter he heats the place by firing up a potbelly coal stove, "similar to one you'd see in an old train depot," Berbaum says. "Friends stop over, we brew our cowboy coffee, see who can tell the biggest lies, laugh a lot and solve the world's problems surrounded by history. It's a great place to hang out."

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Old stock tanks, along with hog and poultry feeders, make great raised bed gardens, says Kathryn Schultz. She paints the larger pieces an attractive bronze color.

Raised Bed Gardening Made Easy With Old Stock Tanks

Kathryn Schultz solved the age-old problem of rabbits and other animals eating her garden produce by planting vegetables in old cattle watering tanks. "No matter what fencing we

used or how we secured it, the rabbits and other raiders seemed to get in," Schultz says. With the large tanks off the ground, those smaller critters aren't a problem, and it's a



Michael Szesze and his wife grow more than 600 insect-eating plant species at their Carnivorous Plant Nursery in Maryland.



Insect-Eating Carnivorous Plants

Carnivorous plants are both fascinating and useful, says Michael Szesze, a retired science teacher, who got interested in insect-eating Venus Flytrap plants as a way to get his students' attention when he was a teacher. Now, he and his wife, Pamela, raise more than 600 insect-eating plant species at their Carnivorous Plant Nursery in Smithsburg, Md. They sell plants and educational material to teachers and also gardeners and others with insect problems.

"There are more than 1,000 species of carnivorous," Szesze says, and he is continually adding more to his 23 acres of garden beds and his greenhouse.

"Carnivorous plants come from bogs so you have to reproduce that environment. They need wet soil all the time; bright, indirect light, and soil that is a mix of peat moss and sand," he explains.

For beginners, the Venus Flytrap and purple American Pitcher plant are good choices. The Cape Sundew is another easy plant to grow. For serious collectors who like a challenge, Szesze has *Cephalotus* from Australia with its unusual and bizarre flowers, and Marsh Pitcher plants from South America.

He has been surprised by the widespread interest in the plants from people of all ages

and backgrounds.

"When we first started, we had 6 to 8 orders a week. Now we get hundreds of orders a week," Szesze says.

The business ships mostly to the U.S., but also worldwide to buyers with permits. Some customers sign up for Szesze's Plant of the Month Club to build a collection of plants.

Szesze says carnivorous plants inspire students to ask questions and inspire them to learn more about plant life. Staff at the nursery are available to make suggestions to teachers who call about adding carnivorous plants to their lesson plans.

And, nursery staff is also happy to help customers fill large terrariums, create outdoor displays, or just grow one or two plants.

"One customer complained about mosquitoes around her house," Szesze says. "So she made a hanging basket of Tropical Sundews. Now she says the mosquitoes go to the plants instead of her ankles. One farmer planted a bunch of plants in a trough by the door to his barn to catch flies."

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lot easier on the back."

Schultz's container garden consists of 6 well-used 120-gal. rectangular galvanized watering tanks, an old hog feeder, and former poultry feeders. She painted the larger pieces a bronze color and arranged them around the circular feeder in the middle. Stock tanks hold soil without bulging because they have ribbed sidewalls and a rolled lip. "At 2 ft. tall, the tanks are just the right height for tending the plants throughout the growing season without kneeling or bending down,"

Schultz says. "The soil is deep enough so it holds moisture well, and holes in the bottoms drain off excess water."

The tanks are arranged over a flat sandy area that used to hold the family's swimming pool. "We raise tomatoes, peppers, cabbage, herbs and a few vegetables, using compost from the cattle for fertilizer, so the plants really grow well."

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