

screen inside the cab. Once I start a job I don't want to get out till it's done. Great machine."

On the negative side, "I bought a new Nissan Titan pickup because it had a Cummins diesel engine. I figured it would be great because it was half American. But we had problems from day one. At first it was problems with the DEF fluid system. The dealer just couldn't fix it. And then the engine died at 2,000 miles. I don't think Nissan has any mechanics who know anything about Cummins diesels. It's been at the shop for 2 years now and I'm going through the Lemon Law process. But I still have to make payments while I wait."

**Matthew B. Bennetch, Bethel, Penn.:** He's pleased with his SIP 700/22T twin rotary rake (www.marloequipment.com; ph 989 681-5718). "We were looking for an economical way to merge spring forage and keep ash levels low. We tried another rotary rake and weren't satisfied until we found the SIP rake with its patented unique walking tandem. This feature keeps the rake level and stable, even on uneven ground. We feel we can make a fluffier window with no additional ash at a much lower cost than with a merger."



**Raymond Bricker, Port Orchard, Wash.:** "I bought a new Echo brush cutter for cutting down blackberry bushes. It has an attachment that you use to mount the cutting blades. When I saw the cost of Echo's replacement blades, I had a friend of mine put the attachment on his lathe and cut it down to fit Harbor Freight saw blades. Went from needing cheaply-made \$12 blades to using good quality Harbor Freight saw blades at 3 for \$16. Goes through blackberry bushes like a hot knife through butter."

**David Greenberg, Burlington, Nova Scotia:** "Bio360 biodegradable mulch has become a best buy for me (https://www.duboisag.com; ph 800 463-9999). I've been market gardening for 24 years, and while conventional poly mulch has been a good tool, it has also been a big problem. That was particularly true if we were using clover in the pathways."

"The roots would grow into the buried plastic, making it hard to pull up at the end of the season. Even if easier to remove early in the spring, it still required a lot of labor."

"Some poly mulches do claim to break down, but may simply fragment into smaller and smaller pieces. Still others are a combination of poly and plant-based material and may only partly degrade. However, 100 percent Bio360 film can be composted or will completely break down in the soil with no toxic residues."

**Michael McCutcheon, Ashland, Wis.:** "My Liberator Rocket Heater has been a best buy for me (www.rocketheater.com; ph 573 468-4043). I used one to heat the yurt I lived in for 2 1/2 years in northern Wisconsin. It kept the 18-ft. diameter, insulated yurt warm and was extremely efficient. In cold winter weather it produced only a coffee can full of ashes every 10 days."

"A rocket heater isn't for everyone. If it fits you, you'll love it; if not, you will regret it."

You need dry wood, as it has to drop down into the firebox quickly as it burns. If there is too much moisture, it's like a motor with a rusty throttle. It can't heat up."



"I used wood pellets, which are fast, easy and cheap, but you can also split dry wood and put it in. With dry wood, the stove heats up fast, reaching 1,300 to 1,400 degrees inside, but is seldom more than 350 to 400 degrees at the barrel ahead of the stovepipe."

"I don't know if it can burn too hot, but when the steel starts to glow (which it can), cut back on the air, and it won't be a problem."

"The chimney cap acts like a turbocharger on the fire, but if you cut off the air feeding the fire, it shuts right down. An hour later, the wood that was in the stove has turned to charcoal, and you can relight it quickly with just a crumpled piece of paper."

"One disadvantage is you can't set it and forget it. It will burn out in about 40 to 50 min. After that the open chimney will suck all the heat out of the room."

"Rather than stay up to shut the airflow down or get up later, I rigged up a simple water clock. It was like a seesaw with a pan of water. When enough water had dripped into the pan, it dropped down and shut the lid on the stove's airflow. If I had to get up during the night to fire up the stove again, I just reset the water clock."

**Alfred Logston, Eufaula, Okla.:** Alfred's best buy is his 2015 Ford F-250 6.2L 4-WD pickup. "It runs great, will pull anything, and has had no mechanical problems. Best truck I've had since my 1960 Ford F-100 that I drove to Alaska."

**Loyal Fulton, Selma, Iowa:** "When I was a boy we carried pocket watches that didn't keep very good time, wore out, or broke easily. Today's Timex watches keep excellent time, last a long time, and don't break easily. John Cameron Swayze had it right when he said 'It keeps a lickin and keeps on tickin'."

**Scott Geyer, Lakeville, Minn.:** "My worst buy is a Brother DCP-L2540WD all-in-one wireless mono laser printer and scanner. This machine is priced under \$200, which is good, and the printer is fine if connected directly to a computer via USB. But the wireless function cuts out repeatedly and the scanner app is not good. I would categorize this printer as an 'all-in-none'."

**Dale Knipp, Tipton, Mo.:** He's happy with his 2 Echo chainsaws and weedeater. "All three start and run very well."

**Charles Blackburn, Evansville, Ind.:** "My best buy was my 1954 Ford NAA tractor. I purchased it used from a local dealer in 1971 with a plow, disk, bush hog and grader. It came with the original manual and service papers. I used it every day from 1971 to 2009 with only one repair - in 1989 I had to replace the pto shaft coupler. In 2009 we retired it. My children later restored it and



Photo by Ron Lyseng, Western Producer

Andy Scheurer uses his Horsch Maestro grain drill to plant all his crops, using different discs for wheat, canola, corn and beans. The big seed tank can hold enough beans to plant 160 acres without stopping.

## "Best Buy" Maestro Drill

**Andy Scheurer, Dugald, Manitoba:** He says his wheat emerged 3 to 4 days earlier and soybeans 4 to 5 days earlier when it was planted with the Horsch Maestro compared to the conventional air drill he had been using.

Scheurer and his brother were impressed by a neighbor's Maestro, noting the machine is gentler and more efficient than an air drill because individual seed is sucked out of the tank and placed into a seed cup on each row unit. Vacuum behind the disc pulls the seed into position and as the disc rotates seed is placed in the seed trench. Accuracy is also improved because of stainless steel metering discs. Now they can use the Horsch to plant all their crops, using different discs for wheat, canola, corn and beans. Scheurer says the electric-driven meters are extremely accurate and individual row shutoffs eliminate double planting.

Another plus for the Maestro was the size of the seed tank, which Scheurer says

can hold enough beans to plant 160 acres without stopping. The Maestro also carries 750 gal. of liquid fertilizer in the main tank and 250 gal. in each saddle tank. They use 5 to 6 gals. of liquid pop-up fertilizer in the row depending on soil conditions. For soybeans the liquid system dribbles in inoculants.

Scheurer says planting in the unit's wheel tracks isn't a problem because when their row units go in the ground the large dual wheels lift up and just skim the ground surface. Most of the planter weight is carried by the tractor tongue and the planting wheels so there's no tire track compaction.

Scheurer says their Horsch was about the same price as a similar sized Deere, but changing the Horsch for different seeds and different crops can be done in half the time as the Deere because just one large component is changed for each row.

now take it to shows and parades."

**Weldon McDowell, Ogden, Ark.:** Weldon purchased a used 1962 New Holland 282 self-propelled square baler. "I have baled thousands of bales with it and it still operates well, with no major repairs."

**Steve Hemm, Sheffield, Iowa:** Steve's "best buy" is a radon test kit. "My best advice to all is to test your house for radon gas. It's the second leading cause of lung cancer. I never smoked but I got lung cancer. When we tested my house, we discovered a high level of radon gas. Protect yourself and your loved ones from this deadly gas."

**Paul Peyton, Ava, Mo.:** Paul's best buy is his Artek Battery Booster (available at Amazon.com). "It measures only 3 by 5 1/4 in. and is only 3/4 in. thick. I've used it to start my 25 hp. diesel Ford, 3.0 L Subaru, Kawasaki motorcycle, and our riding mower. It fits in a short pocket, and holds a charge for months."

**Todd Lemke, Watkins, Minn.:** "I purchased a used New Holland 327 manure spreader after my 1950's Minnesota spreader had a bearing fail and I didn't have time to find parts. It's worked great and I appreciate the different speeds I can run the apron. I've only had to replace two chain links and a few rivets. Great spreader for my small operation."

**Jerry Hon, Florence, Ind.:** Jerry's "best buy" is a Kobalt battery-powered 12-in. 40-volt chainsaw. "It's light and good for cutting posts and shaping them. I also use it to trim trees around hay and pasture fields."

**Will Corson, Jr., Newark Valley, N.Y.:** "Both my Bobcat 751 and 175 skidsteers are best buys. They're really reliable. We use them to move a lot of big square and round bales. The 175 can handle two bales with ease."

**Leete Etheridge, Columbus, Texas:** "I have many Ryobi 18-volt cordless tools and they are all good and tough. I finally broke my drill after years of abuse and bought the latest brushless impact drill and angle grinder

and they seem to be even better. The impact driver has 3 settings which is nice."

"I bought a Milwaukee cobalt drill bit set from Home Depot. The bits break and don't drill like new bits should. I thought I had finally bought a decent set of drill bits only to find out they were junk. I've had good luck with everything else from Milwaukee."

**Raymond Rumford, Ottawa, Kan.:** "We have had several kinds of disk harrows but none holds a candle to the Case IH True-Tandem 375 disk harrow. The way it cuts through trash and weeds and then levels the field is unbelievable. It's a great machine."

**Will Patterson, Kansas City, Mo.:** Will's disappointed with his Ryobi 40-volt cordless trimmer. "The trimmer and battery came with a 5-year warranty. However, the first time I used the trimmer and recharged the battery, some plastic melted on the battery where it plugs in to charge. The battery still worked, but I had to remove the plastic that had melted onto it. Then after a few months the battery quit working completely and wouldn't charge at all. The second battery worked without a problem."

"I took the trimmer back to Home Depot, but they wouldn't honor the warranty and sent me to another store that handled rentals. That store referred me to Ryobi, and when I called them I had to supply the make, model, manufacturing date, serial number, purchase date, store number on the trimmer, battery charger, and battery. Otherwise they wouldn't even talk to me, even though I had registered my purchase online with them. I was also told they couldn't help me unless I would test the battery while still on the phone. Then I was told I would have to send photos."

"After I did that, I was told I needed to take everything to a small engine repair store to have it checked out. By that time I had wasted so much time playing phone and email games that I finally gave up. No more Ryobi products for me."

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