Canopy kit ties a pair of shipping containers together to create a low-cost, portable storage facility.

Hoops attach to a rail-mount system on top of containers.

Canopy Kits Designed For Shipping Containers

A California company says its canopy kit, designed to tie a pair of shipping containers together, creates a portable storage facility that's easy to put up and take down.

"It's an affordable option compared to steel buildings that require footings and slabs and are permanent. Because of their portability, in most cases permits aren't required," says Declan Howlett of Container Canopies.

As a shipping container reseller for more than 20 years, his network of dealers allows him to locate and deliver containers just about anywhere in the U.S. Hoops attach to a rail-mount system attached to the top of the containers. No welding is required. About half of the company's customers set up Container Canopies by themselves. The rest contract with the company's install crews.

"The canopy is made of heavy-duty woven fabric covered in pvc treated with a UV-inhibitor," Howlett says. "They are warrantied a minimum of 10 years but should last 15 to 20 years."

The 12-ga., 3-in. pipe, galvanized steel trusses are engineered for winds up to 105 mph**.** Container standard sizes are 20 or 40 ft. and readily available in most markets.

Cost for a 40 by 40-ft. canopy is $7,495 and a 26-ft. wide by 20-ft. long canopy is $2,995. Clearances from ground to peak are 22 ft. when using 40-ft. "Hi-Cube" containers, and almost 19 ft. for the 20-ft. standard height containers. In the future, Container Canopies plans to expand the available sizes with increased widths and clearances, as well as double-truss models engineered for snow and other rugged conditions, Howlett adds.

"They are most often used as portable work areas for farm maintenance and asset protection," he notes.

The containers are an additional cost, and can range from $2,500 to $3,500 depending on the location of the installation with higher prices farther inland. Howlett works with customers to find containers in their area.

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Clean-out bit pulls loose dirt out of augered hole. Photo shows underside of bit with 5-in. long spike and reinforced blades.

Clean-Out Bit Empties Post Holes

A special "bit" developed by Dale McLaen pulls loose dirt out of augered holes for footings or posts. Tired of having to reach in to remove loose dirt left by the auger, he started looking for an easier way.

McLaen built the clean-out bit to match the holes he commonly bores when setting poles for pole barns. The bit's shank is a 48-in. long, schedule 80 wall pipe. It is welded to the center of a 1/4-in. thick, 24-in. dia. flat disc. A 4-in. tall, 11-gauge metal ring is welded to the outside edge of the disc. Four short lengths of 1/2-in. rebar brace the shank to the edge of the disc to keep it from deforming under down pressure.

"I cut two angled slots in the bottom of the pan to pick up the loose dirt," says McLaen.

The slots look a bit like thin slices of pie that have been removed from the pan. Blades mounted to the leading edge of the slots extend below the pan to sweep the loose dirt into the pan. The blades are reinforced on the bottom side of the pan.

When spinning, the pan is held in place and prevented from walking around the bottom of the hole by a 1-in. sq. by 5-in. long spike. It is welded to the bottom of the pan with 4 small gussets to brace it.

"The gussets also move dirt away from the center bottom side of the bit, allowing the bit to dig in," says McLaen, who uses the clean-out bit on a standard power head.

He notes that even with the 4-in. sides, it takes multiple passes to clean out the average hole. "The pan will usually fill on the first pass," says McLaen. "It will be about half full with the second pass and usually hold only a few handfuls of dirt with the third pass."

Blades welded to leading edge of slots extend below pan to sweep loose dirt into it.

After each pass, he lifts the bit out, tips it horizontally and spins it in reverse to empty.

"I use this bit to clean out every hole I dig," says McLaen. "I've got better things to do with my time than clean out holes by hand."

McLaen approached a large auger bit manufacturer about building his bit, but they declined. "I'm putting it out there via FARM SHOW for anyone who can use it," he says. "They can make their own, or I can custom-build one to the size they need."

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Keith Newnum mounted backhoe outriggers with cylinders on back of his skid loader, which raises the rear end a few inches off the ground.

Outriggers Eliminate Skid Marks

Keith Newnum's skid steer leaves no skid marks on his hard surface driveway, and its wheels last longer too, thanks to his "made it myself" outriggers. Salvaged from a Bobcat backhoe, the outriggers with casters let him turn his skid steer on a dime.

"The outriggers only raise the rear end a few inches off the ground, but that's enough," says Newnum. "When I don't need them, the 12-in. reach on the cylinder rams pulls them up and out of the way."

Newnum got the idea after purchasing a new set of tires for his Bobcat skid steer. Using it on his coarse, blacktop driveway had torn up the first set of tires.

Newnum bought a used backhoe to get the outriggers with cylinders. To attach them, he fabricated eye brackets to fit the pivot points for the skid steer loader arms.

"I used 1/4-in. steel for the bracket and replaced the pivot pin with a longer one," says Newnum. "The outriggers rest against plates at the base of the skid steer and bolt to fingers there. Adjustable knobs ensure they won't slip and pop out."

He used a control valve from an old stump grinder to divert auxiliary power to the outriggers.

"The Bobcat stump grinder cost $3,000 new, but it was slow and no longer worked," says Newnum. "I had been looking for a way to use it. A new control valve with lines would have run me about $800."

Dual caster wheels at bottom of outriggers let Newnum turn skid loader on a dime, without leaving skid marks on his driveway.

The only other modification needed was to mount dual caster wheels to the bottom of each outrigger. Each set has an 1,800-lb. load capacity.

"The skid steer is so easy to turn with them," says Newnum. "Without them, the skid steer is difficult to spin on my blacktop."

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