Remote-controlled, tracked post driver has a low center of gravity to handle even extreme slopes.

Remote Control Post Driver Tackles Tough Terrain

One man can put up fence on even the roughest terrain with the prototype Mountain Goat self-propelled fence post driver. Montana Post Driver has 2 of its Mountain Goat prototypes in the field.

The 10,000-lb. tracked machine has a low center of gravity to handle even extreme slopes. Add a front-end bucket/carryall, rear-mount driver and remote control, and you have a post driver like no other.

"I have fenced a lot of real hard, dry, rocky ground in challenging places to put in a post," recalls Floyd Yoder, Montana Post Driver. "We designed the Mountain Goat to operate safely and easily in difficult situations and terrain."

The remote control allows one person to set the post and drive it, quickly and safely.

"With the Mountain Goat's radio remote control, not only does the operator not have to be on the machine, he can also be up to 200 ft. away while it is traversing a steep slope," says Yoder.

The 6 1/2 by 12-ft. body sits on independent tracks with hydraulic drive motors. A 48 hp. Kubota engine powers the hydraulic pump that drives everything on the 10,000-lb. machine.

Yoder notes that the current design has all the bells and whistles a professional fencer like he once was could ask for. The post driver itself can swing to the left, right or rear of the Mountain Goat chassis. A pilot hole auger alongside the driver helps the jackhammer-type head tap posts into even rocky, packed soils. A front-end-loader type arm on the front of the machine unloads posts from a trailer or truck and carries them to the fence line.

It is the bells and whistles that push the Mountain Goat's projected price over $100,000. However, it is still in the development stage, and Yoder has changes planned.

"We are coming out with a lower cost design," says Yoder. "It may not offer the 3-side post driving. It will also have a different front-mount for buckets.

"The $100,000 may not be too much for a dedicated, professional fencer, especially for a machine that eliminates a second worker," says Yoder. "The lower priced units should appeal to smaller fencing contractors."

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Device Helps Move Bale Elevator

"I got tired of having to bend over and pick up my Hay Hiker bale elevator every time I wanted to move it. So I built a long-handled, 2-wheeled carrier, which hooks up to a drawbar hitch welded to a rectangular frame that's bolted to the elevator. Makes it easy to move the elevator around by hand, or with my garden tractor," says Tom Chaney, Sr., Chrisman, Ill.

"Another advantage is that it raises the bottom of the elevator about a foot or so off the ground, which makes loading bales an easier job. I had everything I needed to build it in my scrap pile."

Chaney operates a sideline business making hay for area farmers, and uses the elevator to load bales into both ends of his barn and onto semi trailers driven by his customers.

The 2-wheeled carrier rides on a pair of 10-in. wheels and is equipped with a long T-bar handle made from 1-in. sq. tubing. The rectangular frame that's bolted to the elevator is made from 2-in. angle iron. Chaney welded a small drawbar hitch onto the frame, and also welded a 6-in. long vertical steel rod onto the carrier's axle.

"To hook up the carrier to the elevator, I just slip the drawbar over the rod," says Chaney. "Even with the carrier removed, the frame keeps the elevator higher off the ground which makes it easier to load bales. It also keeps the elevator chain out of the dirt."

Long-handled, 2-wheeler carrier hooks up to drawbar hitch bolted onto elevator.

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Rainwater drops off garage roof into "half-pipes" mounted on X-shaped wooden supports, and flows into a 300-gal. Rubbermaid tank.

Collecting Rainwater For The Garden

Mark Johnson believes rainwater is the best water you can use in your garden, so last year he started collecting it off his 30 by 40-ft. garage.

"It's a simple, inexpensive system with a small initial investment in gutters, plumbing, filters, and storage tanks. I didn't use any well water at all last summer on the garden," says Johnson.

Rainwater is collected on both sides of the garage's metal roof and drops into a pair of 40-ft. long, 8-in. dia. "half-pipes". They're located about 10 ft. below the roof's eave and supported by 5, 4, and 3-ft. high X-shaped wooden supports that cause the water to gravity-flow into a 300-gal. Rubbermaid tank. From there the water is pumped through a 3/4-in. garden hose to a 550-gal. enclosed cistern tank placed next to the 50 by 150-ft. garden.

"It's a simple system that's easy to set up and also take apart. All the components can be easily picked up and moved around," says Johnson. "One side of the garage has 3 big doors, but if I need to use them it doesn't take long to move everything out of the way. I didn't want to install gutters on the metal roof because heavy snow could easily slide and knock the gutters down."

To make the half-pipes, he applied a snap chalk line the length of each pipe, then used a sabre saw to cut the pipe in half and laid the two pipes together end to end. He used 2 by 4's to build the supports, which measure 18 in. wide at the bottom and top.

Johnson says it doesn't take long to fill the tanks. "It's amazing how much water you can collect from a large roof. A roof like mine with 1,000 sq. ft. will yield more than 600 gal., so a 1-in. rain causes both 300-gal. Rubbermaid tanks to overflow. It's also amazing how much dust comes off the roof and ends up in the water. I wash the tanks out as often as possible to avoid problems with my pumps."

Even though the half-pipes are 10 ft. below the roof, Johnson says they still catch most of the rainwater unless there's a lot of wind. And wind isn't likely to blow the half-pipes over since each one weighs 62 lbs. "I used 8-in. dia. pvc pipes, but 6 or 4-in. dia. pipes would probably work just as well," he says.

He usually runs a garden hose directly from the 300-gal. Rubbermaid tank to the garden, where he uses a watering head to go down between the rows. The 550-gal. cistern tank is used for longer term storage. "I placed the cistern tank on rocks about 18 in. off the ground because I thought I could gravity feed the entire garden with it. However, using gravity was too slow so I installed a pump to boost the pressure."

Johnson says his total cost was around $1,300. "I paid about $500 for the cistern tank and ball valve, and $250 apiece for the Rubbermaid tanks. The lumber used to build the towers cost about $100 and the pvc pipes $200."

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Sliding hitch has an attached hydraulic cylinder, allowing Baxter to align his rotovator directly behind tractor.

Sliding Hitch Makes Rotovator Follow Tractor

Canadian farmer Hugh Baxter says his 3-pt. mounted rotavator works great for tilling between rows of growing vegetables. The only problem was that on sidehills the machine would move to one side or the other by as much as 10 in., nudging too close to a row on the downhill side and leaving untilled weeds next to the uphill side row.

"The spacer mechanism only had two positions, and neither of them held the machine straight behind the tractor," Baxter says. To solve the problem he welded metal pieces resembling ears on the inside of both 3-pt. hitch arms. Then he bolted a piece of 1/2 in. flat bar stock 3-in. long from one ear to the other.

"With those brackets in place, I attached a hydraulic cylinder with a 10-in. stroke to the underside of the bar so I could move the machine from side to side as needed while I was working in the field. The cylinder moves the machine and locks it at whatever position I want and prevents any occasional movement," Baxter says. He controls the cylinder with a valve on the tractor fender that regulates oil flow in the return line of the loader lift cylinders.

Baxter says this simple mechanism lets him keep the machine almost perfectly aligned behind the tractor, even if he's working on a sloping field.

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