

Predator control expert "Trapper Jack" says it's imperative to use good-quality wire for making high-quality snares.



Snares A Great Alternative To Traps

Fences keep livestock in but they don't always keep predators out. Jack Spencer Jr., better known as Trapper Jack, is an expert at snaring predators, especially when they try to pass under, over or through a fence.

"My family has been in predator control since 1897," says Spencer, who is also an award-winning outdoor writer.

A good fence snare starts with high-quality material from a dependable source. "Some cable sold for snares is cheap and kinky cable," says Spencer. "It's imperative to get good quality snare supplies from the start."

He recommends The Snare Shop, Lidderdale, Iowa (www.thesnareshop.com; ph 712-822-5780). It is the only source he will consider for high-quality snares. They carry all types of trapping and snaring supplies, including snare parts, premade snares and snare-making kits. They also sell the tools needed to make quality snares.

"They carry all different cable types," says Spencer. "You can pick from galvanized, stainless, high tensile-strength aircraft cable, multi-strand treated and coated."

Knowing which type of cable to use depends on the target predator. "Some cable is limper than others and that affects how it holds its shape, whether a circle loop or a teardrop," says Spencer. "Then there are the different snare locking mechanisms to hold the animal when it pushes through."

He recommends beginners and others interested in snaring spend some time at The Snare Shop website. They offer basic information on snaring, choosing the right snare, state regulations, helpful tips and tricks, as well as instruction manuals, videos and books.

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"Made To Last" Artisan Brooms

Rebecca Worley got into broom making when she purchased her first home from Austin Boyd, who happened to be a broom maker. When ill health prevented him from making brooms, Worley convinced him to teach her the craft and to sell her his late 1800's equipment even though he said she was "not big enough or strong enough".

She proved she was capable and earned his approval. She now has 22 years experience running her business, Cooksey Creek Brooms. In the beginning she did it all, even growing the broomcorn (grain sorghum) and separated and cleaned the straw. Now she purchases cleaned straw along with dowels for broom handles from a Texas company. An Arkansas business sells her most of the hardwood saplings for handles, but she also looks for interesting saplings and twisted wood to peel, dry, sand and seal.

"The sapling handles with weaving on it are my best selling brooms," Worley says. "I don't know what it is about them, but they have different curves and fit hands better. That's all I use at home."

With colored straw that she dyes herself, those brooms sell for \$50.

The process begins by soaking the straw until it's pliable. She secures it the broom handle with 17-gauge fence wire (and fence staples) by operating a kickwinder's foot pedal to turn a wheel that binds six straw layers. The kickwinder is big, at 5-ft. 5-in. tall, and built out of heavy cast iron that takes six men to move.

After the straw dries for 72 hrs., Worley hand sews the broom straw with a 6-in. long needle. She only has three of the century-old needles so she takes good care of them. To cover the wire, she weaves broomcorn stalks into decorative coverings. Finally she trims the ends, purposely leaving some of the fuzzy ends (hurl) because they help the broom pick up dust and hair.

"The brooms are made to last. I build



Cooksey Creek Brooms are made using 1800's equipment. They're made to be used, but some people hang them on the wall as decorations.

them to be used," Worley says. But, she notes, some of her creations, like the whisk brooms with deer antler handles or brooms with twisted wood handles are often used for decoration.

"It is such a humbling thing to get to do what you love to do the best," she says, noting she loves the whole process. It offers her stress relief as a nursing assistant in the acute care area of a hospital.

Her work is creative and traditional, earning her invitations from Silver Dollar City in Branson, Mo., as an artisan, where she wears late 1800's style dresses and aprons that she sews. Customers can watch her work on the old equipment and purchase brooms from her there. She also can ship them, (\$25 extra for full length brooms.)

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Pawpaw fruit can grow in Zones 5-8, and has a high nutritional value.

Pawpaw Fruit Making A Comeback

North America's largest edible native fruit is making a comeback. The tropical-tasting pawpaw fruit that fed Native Americans and sustained new settlers as well as members of the Lewis & Clark expedition, is now being embraced as a highly nutritious food and trendy flavor for microbrewery beers. If you live in Zones 5-8 and have the right soil (pH 5-7), you may want to plant a pair of pawpaw trees on your property.

"It can be organically grown because not a lot of pests affect it and it has lots of nutritional value and antioxidants," says Chris Chmiel, who began marketing pawpaws from his Albany, Ohio, orchard in 1996.

Chmiel and his wife, Michelle Gorman, have two acres of pawpaw trees. Because livestock won't harm the trees or fruit, they use goats to graze the grass and weeds around the trees. The goats also attract flies, beetles and other bugs that pollinate pawpaws.

The fruit has its challenges, however. "It's main limitations are a short shelf life and a short harvest season," Chmiel says, adding the fruit must be at least partially ripe before picking. If eaten green it tastes bad and can make people sick.

Add to that, the fruit's softness makes it easily bruised so it can't be stacked in layers like other fruit.

Chmiel's solution is to pick slightly under-ripe fruit that can be sold fresh and stored in a cooler for about 2 weeks, then removed from storage to ripen at room temperature.

But he allows most of the pawpaws to ripen completely and fall on ground ivy, a native plant that provides a nice cushion around the pawpaw trees. The soft flesh is removed from the skin, frozen and sold through his company, Integration Acres.

Neal Peterson, who tasted his first pawpaw and began studying the fruit in 1976 when he was 27, earned a master's degree in plant genetics. While he worked for the USDA as an economist, he began a breeding experiment with 1,500 pawpaw seedlings, collected from historic collections. He performed this research with cooperation of the University of Maryland for 18 years. Through decades of evaluating the most promising trees of the 1,500, he developed seven pawpaw varieties that have higher yields and larger, fleshier, more flavorful fruit than wild pawpaw.

"Beware buying bare root; you may have a dead sapling," Peterson says. "Buy potted plants (at least two for good pollination) that are at least 24-in. tall. And it is best to buy grafted named varieties. Their fruit quality will be superior to random wild-sourced seedlings. A seedling pawpaw will take seven years to flower while a grafted tree usually flowers in four years."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Integration Acres, 9794 Chase Rd., Albany, Ohio 45710 (ph 740-698-6060; info@integrationacres.com); www.integrationacres.com; or Peterson Pawpaws, Harpers Ferry, W. Va. (www.petersonpawpaws.com).

High-Tech Horseshoe Flexes Naturally

The EponaShoe is a composite horseshoe made from three types of polyurethane secured with small internal steel stiffeners. This provides the shoe with "whole-hoof flexibility" that brings your horse closer to a barefoot experience while still providing support, comfort and protection from rough terrain.

Unlike traditional shoes made from rigid steel or aluminum, the EponaShoe's materials don't constrict how the hoof naturally flexes. Some of EponaShoe's competitors create composite shoes with a large piece of metal within the polyurethane. This offers better shock absorption than traditional steel shoes but restricts the whole hoof from flexing.

Other brands provide too much flexibility, which results in shoes that don't offer support, lose their shape and can't hold nails well-meaning they must be attached by gluing on the sidewall of the hoof with plastic tabs. This glue builds up over time and takes months to grow out, meaning you may stress the hoof by gluing over the same spot repeatedly. In contrast, EponaShoes are glued to the underside of the hoof. This means that every hoof trim removes the previous glue, so you start fresh.

EponaShoes work for anyone who wants their horse to have a long career, including everyone from casual riders to the US Olympic Dressage team.

EponaMind spent years designing and perfecting their composite horseshoe. The



EponaShoe horseshoes are soft enough to flex with the hoof but strong enough to offer support.

company maintains a test herd of 12 horses that wear each new model to ensure the shoes are the best possible before putting them on the market. EponaShoes retail from \$18 for a Pony Style pair to \$199 for a Starter Kit (plus shipping).

Beyond its horseshoes, EponaMind produces software for measuring and tracking the hoof for better long-term care. The company also hosts learning events with world-famous speakers.

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