Ultra bright LED strip lights were zip tied to the vacuum tubes on this Deere 36-row soybean planter. "It's amazing how much light 900 LED's put out," says Nebraska farmer Jeremy Bacon.

He Lights His Planters Up With LEDs

Nebraska farmer Jeremy Bacon says he and his dad will have an easier time planting after dark this year because of the new LED lights they added to their planters. "My brother-in-law Justin Walsh and I have seen LED strip lights a few places and figured for a few bucks, why not give them a try," Bacon says. "After checking a few online sources we found them on Amazon."

Bacon and Walsh used zip ties to fasten the ultra bright LED strip lights to the vacuum tube on his Deere 36-row soybean planter. "There are 600 lights on a 40-ft. roll, so we spliced strips together to extend the full width of the 60-ft. planter. The strips have a double row of lights, are waterproof and designed for outdoor use." They powered the lights by tapping into the planter's OEM CCS platform light switch.

"It's really amazing how much light 900 LED's put out," Bacon says. "I took nightime pictures with the planter in front of our machine shed and the whole side of the building was lit up."

Bacon says that he, Walsh, and his dad were so impressed with the bean planter lighting that they put the same setup on his corn planter. They zip-tied the string lights under the toolbar, which he says provides an excellent nighttime view of the row units, row cleaners, disk openers and closing wheels.

"I've probably got $125 or so into the lights and about 3 hrs. of time invested once we figured out where and how to mount them," Bacon says. "We also put strips around the base of the center fill tanks so when they're lit, the planters look like giant bumblebees."

Bacon shared photos of his planters to friends on Twitter and he says they "lit up" social media. "I had friends and neighbors asking me how I did that and farmers were even coming to the dealer asking where they could get the lights," Bacon says.

The lights he used are made by Roofeng and run off 12-volt DC power.

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No-Cost 18-Ft. Pallet Tower

It didn't cost Ross Dahlke a penny to build a pallet tower using salvaged materials.

An 8-ft. square pallet serves as a base for the tower, which he uses as a deer stand. It overlooks a field near their New Norway, Alberta farm.

He used a loader to stack the pallets and then tied them all together with steel cable, anchoring the cables to 2-in. dia. pipe anchors.

Two power poles fitted with 1-in. dia. pieces of pipe steps were used to make a ladder to get up to the top, which has upright pallets around it to serve as guard rails.

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Ross Dahlke built this pallet tower as a deer stand. He uses power poles fitted with pipe steps to get to the top.

Hudnall used the G design, with its rear-mount engine and forward-mounted attachments, as a template. Salvaged parts, and a 13-hp. Predator engine, give front and rear tool carriers many options for cultivator shovels and bedding disks.

Shop-Made "G" Gets The Job Done

When Thomas Hudnall saw his first Allis Chalmers G, he knew he wanted one. A customer stopped by Hudnall's machine shop to discuss repowering a G with a Continental engine. A stiff neck was making gardening more difficult for Hudnall, and he could see the benefits of the G with its attachments located down below the operator's knees.

"I asked around, but I couldn't find one for a reasonable price," recalls Hudnall. " I decided to build my own."

Hudnall used the G design with its rear-mount engine and forward-mounted attachments for his template. Salvaged parts played a big role in the G-tractor project, although he did buy a used Wheel Horse 2-speed transmission and a 13-hp. Predator engine from Harbor Freight.

"The Predator has plenty of power, and I haven't had any problems with it," says Hudnall. "One of my customers has a lawn care service, and he told me the Predator is a Honda clone, and if you know which model, you can use Honda parts on it."

The high/low transmission gives him 6 speeds forward and 2 reverse for lots of speed options in the garden, not to mention pulling power.

Setting the transmission on top, combined with the wheeled legs, gives him 38-in. clearance. He fabricated chain drives in oil baths inside the steel tubing legs to transfer power to the rear wheels.

"I used 15-in. tires on the rear wheels," says Hudnall. "One thing I would do different is to go with bigger tires on the back. I added water to these, but they will spin out when pulling up a bed. I get by making 2 passes."

Front wheels, hubs and bearings are from a boat trailer. Power steering is provided by a hydraulic cylinder salvaged from a hay baler.

"I took the clevis off and threaded the rod for a tie rod," says Hudnall.

The tractor's independent brakes are from a car a friend was taking to the salvage yard. Brake and clutch pedals are from a Kubota tractor that had rolled over and been totaled out. Hudnall added a hydraulic pump he rebuilt to power lift cylinders on front and rear toolbars. It also powers a Kubota tractor steering motor he rebuilt.

"I do some work with a local Kubota dealer, and they give me worn out pumps and such they can no longer get parts for," says Hudnall. "I take them home and rebuild them."

Adding the hydraulics presented a problem for Hudnall. He was unsure where to put a reservoir until he thought about the steel tubing frame.

"I thought it might hold 2 to 3 gal., but when I did the calculations, it held 5," says Hudnall. "Fluid goes in at one end and a spin-on filter at the return keeps the oil clean."

Lift cylinders on the front tool carrier and the rear rocker arms were rebuilt along with salvaged tie-rod cylinders. One front cylinder was off of a burned-up machine.

"I replaced the rod, bored out some rust in the cylinder and resealed it," says Hudnall. "It and the other front cylinder are 2-in. cylinders, while the rear is a 2 1/2-in. cylinder. All 3 have about a 10-in. stroke."

Hudnall has fabricated or modified attachments for the tractor. The front and rear tool carriers provide practically unlimited options for cultivator shovels and bedding disks. Mounted ahead of him, his old Covington 1-row planter is easy to monitor for seed drop and refilling.

Some tools are simpler than others, but no less effective. Hudnall side dresses his sweet corn ahead of tassel with the aid of a 5-gal. bucket. The bucket lid has a hole drilled in it with a 1-in., clear plastic tube in the hole.

"I have it mounted by my feet," he says. "When I drive down the row, I tip the bucket over to let the fertilizer gravity feed out. When I get to the end of the row, I tip it back to stop the flow."

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"Bucket Backstop" Keeps Silage From Spilling Out

Richard Tvrdy needed a way to keep silage from spilling out the back of the bucket on his skid loader as he raised it to dump feed into a bunk or wagon. So he bolted a metal grate onto the bucket to form a low-cost "backstop".

"I use it on my Bobcat 773. The grate extends about one foot above the bucket, which is high enough to contain most of the silage," says Tvrdy. "My skid loader doesn't have a cab, and in the past if I lifted the bucket too high silage would spill out onto my lap."

He cut up an old metal grate to size, drilled 3 holes into it and the bucket, and used 3/8-in. bolts to attach it to the bucket.

"To enter the cab on this skid loader you have to climb over the bucket, so I bolted a 2-in. angle iron step on front of it to provide easier access," notes Tvrdy.

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Metal grate bolted onto bucket keeps silage from spilling out. Note bolted on angle iron step.