

The Nut Wizard Gets An Upgrade

By Chad Smith

Cecil Holt of Douglas, Georgia, came up with the Nut Wizard to make retrieving nuts off the ground fast and easy. The push model units were first featured in FARM SHOW's Vol. 38, No. 5. Recently, Holt built an attachment to mount several Nut Wizards on the side of a garden tractor to use in orchards.

The Nut Wizard is a rotating wire basket. As you push the basket along the ground, nuts work their way between the wires and wind up inside the basket.

He wanted to make the Nut Wizard work at a faster pace, so he mounted it to the side of his zero-turn lawn mower. It's easier to see the nuts on the ground and where you're going on a lawn mower. He uses the zero-turn mower to run in circles around trees or in a straight line to pick up nuts that fall farther from the tree.

"I offset the baskets that pick up the nuts so they can operate at the same time and not hit each other," he says.

"I picked up about 25 lbs. of nuts in the first 2 min. I used it," Holt says. "And they're clean. As the baskets rotate, the wires will chew up any leaves that get in there as long as they're at least somewhat dry. When the nuts hit the wires in the basket, they actually help grind up any leaves that get in there."

He's applied for a patent on the lawn mower edition of the Nut Wizard. Working with the new unit this year, Holt says he picked up about 12,000 lbs. of nuts in 6 days. He already has satisfied customers who've purchased a motorized Nut Wizard, even before the patent goes through.



Nut Wizard mounts on side of garden tractor for use in orchards. Nuts push their way into rotating baskets.

"I'd say an 82-year-old man picking up that many Black Walnuts in a single week is impressive," he says with a laugh.

The arm mounts to the lawn mower deck. It's flexible enough that you could drive into a ditch with it and the unit would stay level the whole time.

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"Pallet Walls" Offer Unique Look

Pallet slats can be things of beauty, says Bob O'Neil, Stanwood, Mich., who recently used slats off old pallets to refinish some of the walls in his home, including the kitchen and his son's bedroom. The slats are placed at a 45 degree angle and fastened with finishing screws onto the drywall.

"I'm an art teacher at a local middle school and noticed a lot of leftover pallets piled up outside. When we decided to remodel our house, I found a use for them," says O'Neil. "We live in a resort-type area with a lot of cabins, so the rustic look fits right in. You can still see the original nail holes in the slats."

"Placing the slats at an angle creates an exciting look, and changing the angle back the other way on adjacent walls helps, too. I plan to extend pallet walls out to our living room in order to tie everything together in our house."

The slats are attached with finishing screws to the drywall and can be quickly popped off, which will make them easy to remove in the future, if necessary, says O'Neil. "The small heads on the finishing screws look a lot like nail holes in the wood."

The slats are weathered to different shades of grey, depending on the pallet's age and the kind of wood they're made from. "The pallets I used were made from oak, cherry, maple, and pine, and based on what I smelled when cutting or sanding the slats there may have been some applewood in there, too," says O'Neil. "However, I prefer slats made from hardwood trees because they look nicer and should hold up better over time."

"It was often a challenge to remove the slats without splitting them," says O'Neil. "I found that a double prybar worked best to prevent splits. Once the slats were removed I ran them through a table saw to make sure they were all the same width. I sanded them down with 80 grit sandpaper to remove any splinters."

Installing the slats was a relatively easy



Bob O'Neil used slats off old pallets to refinish the walls in his home, placing the slats at a 45 degree angle to create an exciting look.



job. "I started at a bottom corner of the wall, and used a big plastic framing square to set the first slat at a true 45 degree angle to the floor. Then I added slats on both sides and screwed them on, using the wall studs wherever I could," says O'Neil.

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Stove Collection A Walk Through History

Dennis Gunsolus has collected and restored heating and cook stoves for nearly five decades. He has more than 200 19th and early 20th Century stoves in his collection, and they're far from ordinary. They include the most rare art stoves ever built in the U.S.

Currently the stoves fill his basement and are part of the décor in his Duluth, Minn., home. At 73, Gunsolus is starting to think about the future of his stoves.



Gunsolus has more than 200 19th and early 20th century stoves in his collection, including some very rare ones.

"The collection is like a chronology almost from the beginning of stoves. It's important that the collection stays together for that reason. It includes the best column stoves, cooking ranges, and art stoves and it shows how they evolved," Gunsolus says.

His passion for stoves ignited in the early 70's in Oregon, when he was traveling on his motorcycle after getting out of the Air Force. An antique shop owner where he worked got him interested in buying, restoring and selling stoves. Through careers in math, medicine and contracting, he continued to collect, selling the common stoves and keeping the best ones.

"I was just fascinated by the workmanship of the stoves. It was important that workmanship and art could be put into such a functional piece of equipment as a stove," Gunsolus says.

Artists spent up to two years carving

Custom Lift For Heavy Bee Hive Boxes

John Carson of Sunshine Bees in Sherwood Park, Alberta made a lift system to move bee hive boxes full of honey, which can weigh up to 125 lbs. each. "Bee Boxes full of honey are awkward to handle. Too many people get out of beekeeping or don't get into it because of this issue, which is a shame," says Carson.

Carson originally built a hive lifter that was portable, but it didn't work out so he designed a post and rail system. "The hives at our operation are on a concrete pad, so we anchored the posts. We used scrap square tubing and angle iron, but other materials would work too. We used Unistrut for the channel and rollers, but barn door rollers could also work."

"Our posts are spaced 10 ft. apart and 8ft. off the ground. Two boxes of honey can weigh 250 lbs., so you don't want to space the posts too far apart. Most bee work happens behind the hive, so leave as much space as practical," says Carson.

For hives that are on the ground Carson recommends drilling in wood posts on each side of the hive, and connecting them with 2 by 6 lumber that the track could hang from.

"We built our system in a couple of days. Any 12-volt winch will do. The cradle that holds the boxes is welded together from 1



Stoves fill Gunsolus's basement. "I'm fascinated by their workmanship," he says.

patterns out of hickory for stove designs. For example, his Art Westminster 402 stove is from a pattern carved by Italian artist Carlo Abruzzi. It includes fine filigree designs on the cast iron and an illustration of two men on green tiles. With only four stoves in existence like it, it's very valuable.

When he looks at his stoves, Gunsolus remembers some of the adventures he had while chasing them down. When a collector sent him a photo of an 1886 Art Acorn stove in Utah that was for sale, Gunsolus thought it was a joke at first.

Because of its perfect original condition, he considers it the Holy Grail of the 1880's art stoves. It has a prominent place in his living room.

With all those memories and the work collecting, restoring and maintaining, Gunsolus is considering the future of his collection. He has no children to pass it on to, so he has talked to curators of the top museums in the country about giving them the stoves. There has been interest, but not enough to meet Gunsolus' request.

"I don't want them to break it up and sell some pieces. It's important that it stays together," he says.

He invites museums or individuals interested in meeting those terms to contact him.

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Homemade lift system is used to move bee hive boxes full of honey.

by 2-in. rectangular tubing. I have not seen another system like ours. We placed a hinge on a horizontal bar of the cradle and added handles. Squeezing the handles opens up the cradle," says Carson.

According to Carson, the cost for a small system to handle around 6 hives would be about \$400 US. Larger operations use truck-mounted lifting systems that can cost as much as \$40,000.

"We don't have plans drawn up for the system, but I would be happy to take a look at plans if someone wants to build a system," says Carson.

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