

Wool Pellets Trap Moisture, Supply Nitrogen To Plants

Karen Wilde didn't know what to think when her husband, Albert, poked bits of sheep wool around her potted plants before they left on a week-long vacation. But when the couple returned and the pots weren't dried out, she admitted that maybe he was on to something.

Since that first experiment, the Croydon, Utah, farm couple have figured out how to pelletize wool to sell to gardeners, greenhouse operators, and other growers. And they've learned that wool pellets do much more than hold 20 percent of their weight in water and then release it slowly. They also have a whopping amount of nitrogen at 9-0-2 NPK.

The pellets are sold in 8 oz. bags (\$11.99), 22-lb. bags (\$135), and 2 lb. bags for the retail market as well as 1,000-lb. totes for commercial markets. Currently, most customers use pellets in potted plants and around garden plants.

"We've found that it's good for everywhere," Albert says, whether the pellets are holding moisture in arid climates like Utah, or protecting plants in water-saturated fields in British Columbia.

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Reader Inquiry No. 91



Pelletized wool contains a lot of nitrogen which plants like.



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Zero-Turn "Blowdozer" 2.0

Bob O'Neil was happy with the "Blowdozer" he made by converting a Husqvarna zero-turn mower with a pair of Stihl backpack leaf blowers (Vol. 43, No. 6). He recently bought a new Simplicity Cobalt commercial zero-turn mower, and had to redesign the leaf blowing system - which gave him the opportunity to improve and simplify it at the same time.

"I call it my Blowdozer 2.0. The entire system can be put on or taken off in less than 5 min.," says O'Neil. "I kept the same pair of Stihl backpack leaf blowers, but the new mower is designed different so I was able to add adjustable mounts, rotating nozzles, and a simpler leaf blower mounting system. It works great. In fact, I recently mowed/blowed my entire yard, and my neighbor's yard in just 23 min."

With the original Husqvarna mower, O'Neil set the rollbar back 90 degrees and built a platform on it for the 2 backpack leaf blowers. "The blowers sat kind of loose," he says. "So on the new mower, I turned both halves of the rollbar upside down and then welded a metal platform onto each one. The blowers rest solidly in a 6-in. deep channel in each platform and are secured by bungee cords. To detach the blowers, all I do is

twist the blower tube and slide it back from the old nozzle."

To move the air from back to front, he mounted 4-in. dia. pvc pipe, sized to match the blower tubes, to either side of the seat and around the mower armrests just like on the original system. But instead of directing the air through a pine board attached to the mower's swivel wheel support arms, he installed a length of 2-in. square tubing with a series of pre-drilled holes in it on front of the mower deck. The pipes are fitted with brackets and 1 1/2-in. square tubing that slides inside 2-in. tubing, allowing the pipes to be moved closer together or farther apart.

The nozzles are also more adjustable. "A set of 45-degree fittings directs the air ahead of the deck through slightly smaller pvc pipes to boost velocity. Sewer pipe clamps connect the fittings and allow me to rotate



Redesigned leaf blowing system features adjustable pvc pipe mounts, rotating nozzles, and a simpler leaf blower mounting system.

the pipes in order to adjust the direction of the tips," says O'Neil. "The nozzles can blow in a V-plow pattern or shoot off to either side."

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