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Wooden Saddles For Goats

Dennis Willingham makes saddles, panniers, and halters tailored specifically for goats through Butt-Head Pack Goats located in Rough and Ready, Calif. The family-owned and operated business has been running since 1988, with Willingham making every item by hand since the start.

While goats may seem an unusual choice for a pack animal, many breeds are well suited for the task. "A 200-lb. goat can carry 25 percent of its weight (about 50 lbs.) when fully conditioned," says Willingham. "This makes them great for packing out equipment for hiking, camping, hunting, and fishing trips."

You'll need to start bonding and training potential pack goats when they're young and expect them to reach full carrying capacity by four years old. For best success with training, goats need to get used to wearing a saddle from the start.

Every Butt-Head saddle starts as oak and poplar lumber that Willingham cuts, sands, assembles, and stains. He adds the rigging and saddle pads at the end to complete each piece. The saddles are cross buck design and come with quick-release buckles for easy cinch adjustment and faster saddling and unsaddling.

Wood is his material of choice for a reason. "I like the wood design because of its structure and sturdy frame," says Willingham. "The wood cross buck holds the paddles in the correct place. This is better than a soft saddle design that flexes down on

the goat's sides when adding weight. When weight is added to a soft saddle, it compresses inward where a wood frame holds its shape."

Using wood is also an aesthetic choice. Willingham explains, "Originally, pack animal saddles were all designed with wood. I enjoy keeping the traditional pack design look."

Each design element aims to reduce the chances of saddle sores to ensure goats can carry their maximum load without discomfort. "My goats have never had a saddle sore," he says. "The key is a well-fitted saddle."

Willingham tends to make his saddles in batches, and most are spoken for before he finishes them. As he explains, "On average, a single saddle and pannier order will ship out in about 2 weeks. Orders are sent out on a first-come, first-served basis. During our busy time of the year or for very large orders, it can take longer. So, order ahead to ensure you have what you need before planning a trip."

Each wooden saddle costs \$200 plus shipping and has all the necessary straps, padding, and double cinches.

The best way to order saddles is by email with a list of items you want. The company will clarify any sizing considerations and send you an order total, which can be paid by check or money order.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Butt-Head Pack Goats, P.O. Box 333, Rough and Ready, Calif. 95975 (bhpackgoats@hotmail.com; www.buttheadpackgoats.com).



Iowa State University's website lists a habitat seed mix with milkweed and about 50 wildflower and native grass species that attract and benefit monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

Iowans Take Saving Monarchs Seriously

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

With a goal of establishing 790,000 acres of monarch butterfly habitat by 2038, Iowa understands the importance of identifying non-crop areas to establish habitat in agricultural landscapes. Specifically, monarchs need milkweeds to eat during the caterpillar stage and nectar plants when they are butterflies.

With 50 members including ag and other businesses, state and federal agencies, and universities, the Iowa Monarch Conservation Consortium, which is supported by Iowa State University (ISU), offers farmers, gardeners, and rural and urban communities ways to create habitat for monarchs to thrive. Reports from 2018 through 2020 indicate

Iowa established 340,000 acres of habitat. That's about the size of Houston city limits and a good start, says Nicole Shimp, program specialist at ISU.

"We've seen a good jump in habitat established in agriculture areas through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)," she says. Some milkweed species set deep roots to tolerate less productive soils and dry spells, while other species grow well in wet soil.

ISU research provides useful information about the best way to establish milkweed and pollinator habitat, says Steve Bradbury, Professor, Emeritus who's been part of the consortium since it started in 2014. The site,



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Retired Farrier Makes New Start As Artist

By Lydia Noyes, Contributing Editor

When he was young, Steve Teichman hoped to earn an art degree and become a professional artist. But as a teenager, he went in a different direction.

While in high school, Teichman applied for an internship at a distinguished farrier school in Delaware. There he learned valuable horse care skills that he used to support himself for the following years through part-time work after school and during the summer.

Further education in college set him on the career path to becoming a full-time farrier. Teichman earned a reputation for quick and careful work. He became renowned for identifying and solving problems that horses developed in the middle of high-stakes competitions that might otherwise have disqualified them.

Over his 26-year career, Teichman worked with horses at multiple Olympic and world championship events. By 2019, Teichman was ready to retire from farriery. At that time, he rediscovered his passion for art.

He started by using his forging skills to create jewelry for friends and family but quickly branched out to a larger customer base. These days, he spends his time painting with watercolors and crafting jewelry from silver, metal, and semi-precious gemstones.

There's more overlap between tending to horses' hooves and making jewelry than most people would think. Teichman utilizes many



Many of Teichman's orders come from riders that remember him from his farriery days.

skills that he learned in the trade and still uses many of the same tools for his jewelry making.

Teichman's watercolor paintings tend to be landscapes based on sketches he made during his travels as a farrier. For jewelry, he specializes in silver bracelets, many made with motifs meaningful to equestrians, including stars for the four and five-star competitions. Many of his orders are custom requests from riders that remember him from his farriery days.

To inquire about a custom order, you can connect with Teichman through his Facebook page, Bear Metal Works.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Steve Teichman (sherpas59@verizon.net; www.facebook.com/bmwmetal/).

<https://monarch.ent.iastate.edu/habitat-how>, guides growers through site selection and preparation, management, and sources for seed and local contacts.

"Research shows that monarchs lay increasing amounts of eggs in habitat plots of half an acre to 7 acres," he says. Optimally, habitat patches 150 to 300 ft. apart create "easy stepping stones" for female monarchs moving across agricultural landscapes looking for milkweed to lay eggs and blooming wildflowers for nectar.

"Right now, what's most important is to establish habitat and don't worry about where you're putting plots," Bradbury says. Habitat sites established throughout Iowa's agricultural landscapes, including sites near crop fields, are predicted to produce more monarchs across the landscape as compared to scenarios in which no habitat is established within 100 to 125 feet of corn and soybean fields. If farmers follow practices to reduce pesticide spray drift and use integrated pest management practices, research indicates that maximum benefits for monarch populations will be realized.

Establishing pollinator plants when installing water quality projects, like artificial wetlands or saturated buffers, provides an efficient way to stack conservation benefits.

Farmers could also consider planting milkweed and nectar plants on less productive cropland in spaces between sheds and grain bins that are costly and labor-intensive to maintain with mowing.

A potential approach the Consortium is exploring with USDA is to see if existing, native grass-dominated CRP sites could be augmented with milkweed and native wildflowers.

Many landowners have started planting monarch habitat seed mixes on roadsides. It can be challenging to ensure local governments and farmers who maintain the ditches do not cut them until after caterpillars are done feeding on milkweed, as late as mid-August in Iowa.

Gardeners and homeowners also participate. For example, Iowa's Blank Park Zoo promotes a "Plant. Grow. Fly." project with "recipes" for seed mixes for butterflies. There are many options from growing in pots to acreage.

The Iowa State University website lists a habitat seed mix with milkweed and about 50 wildflower and native grass species that attract and benefit monarch butterflies and other pollinators. Using a diversity of wildflowers can ensure blooming flowers and nectar throughout the season to support migration and reproduction. The Iowa Tallgrass Prairie Center has an online calculator to help choose the right seeds for different soils and regions of the state.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Iowa Monarch Conservation Consortium, 2310 Pammel Dr., c/o 339 Science II, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011 (ph 515-294-9227; neshimp@iastate.edu; <https://monarch.ent.iastate.edu>).