

## Concrete Park Honors Dedicated Artist

Fred Smith retired as a lumberjack at 62 years old, but in many ways, his life's work was only beginning. He spent the following few decades constructing distinctive, larger-than-life statues that came to be known as the Wisconsin Concrete Park.

Smith preferred to work with concrete and had a quick, intuitive artistic style. He was entirely self-taught and learned through constant experimentation. At one time, his Concrete Park contained 99 distinct animal sculptures.

The creation process began with a poured concrete footing about 1 ft. deep. Smith would then form each figure from a couple of strips of lumber wrapped with barbed wire. Once the "skeleton" took shape, he would fill the form with cement. Smith made half of each sculpture as it laid down, then he'd raise it on the footing and complete the remainder as it stood upright. He'd make the arms, hands, and heads separately before erecting them to the form.

Smith accessorized each piece with odds and ends. His early works featured paint and low-relief glass embellishments. His later pieces included whole glass bottles, auto-reflectors, mirrors, and more. Friends and neighbors proved invaluable for helping him erect his heavy pieces and tracking down hard-to-find accessories like horse harnesses and carriages.

Many statues include plaques with narration from Smith that explain their meaning and inspiration. One piece, Mable the Milker, shows a woman milking a cow by hand. Smith explains that Mable has tried all manner of power milk machines but, in the end, has decided to stick with the cheapest option—her hands.

Smith had extreme arthritis over the 15



Photo courtesy of Wisconsin Concrete Park  
**Smith with one of his many concrete sculptures.**

years he created his sculptures, but it didn't deter him from forever brainstorming new ideas. His final project proved his most ambitious—a Budweiser Clydesdale team complete with eight draft horses and two ponies that took him over 6 mos. to complete. Soon after Smith finished the horse team, he suffered a stroke that put him in a rest home. Though he lived another eleven years, he never managed to return to creating the sculptures he loved.

Today, the Wisconsin Concrete Park is open to visitors year-round during daylight hours. Guided tours can be arranged in advance by contacting the park. A \$50 donation is suggested.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Wisconsin Concrete Park, N8236 State Hwy. 13, Phillips, Wis. 54555 (ph 715-339-7282; fofs@pctcnet.net; www.wisconsinconcretepark.org).

## Rare Apple Rediscovered

The Dockham Russet apple was thought to be lost but now has been rediscovered at an old farm site. The site was one of hundreds of former small farms removed by early 1942 to make room for what became the Badger Army Ammunition Plant (BAAP) near Baraboo, Wis. All farm buildings on the 10,500-acre plant were cleared at the time.

Dan Bussey, apple explorer and historian (Vol. 43, No. 6), and two fellow apple buffs, Curt Meine and Rob Nurre, have been investigating apple trees still found on the Badger property.

"We've seen hundreds of apple trees growing on the land," says Bussey. "We found this good-sized apple that tasted really good on a tree in a row of five trees. We didn't know what it was, but when you see them in a pattern, you know they were planted by someone."

Bussey noted that it had a brown russet covering, but underneath it was a deep red, which he said is unusual for russet apples. After paging through his Illustrated History of Apples in the United States and Canada, he established that it was a Dockham Russet. It had been promoted before 1877 by an area apple nursery owned by A.G. Tuttle.

"The description fit the apple and the tree, and I found it within 8 miles of the nursery's location," says Bussey.

With further research, he learned that the apple was named for a family who moved from New Hampshire to the Baraboo area. Bussey speculates that they may have brought apple seeds with them, planting them at their new farm. One of their sons worked with Tuttle's son and may have been the conduit for the apple from farm to nursery and regional promotion.

"The tree we found is the only Dockham Russet known to have survived," says



**Bussey has identified around 100 farmstead apple trees through his research.**

Bussey. "Identifying the apple trees at the Badger property is a slow process. We've found other farmstead trees. One is a massive crab tree with lovely red fruit."

When a tree is identified, scion wood is grafted onto rootstock, and the three apple explorers plant it in an orchard in nearby Sauk City. The orchard is a memorial to the farm families that were forced out.

"If we can identify the farm where the tree was found, we try to contact members of the family," says Bussey. "If they're interested, we provide them with trees that have grafts from the original. We also offer classes on grafting and pruning to them. More than a few families have accepted trees."

So far, Bussey has identified around 100 farmstead trees. He's also discovered wild ones with attractive qualities. "We found a ditch apple that's a fabulous cooking and eating apple," he says. "We've also found some potential cider apples with a lot of sugar and tannins."

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## How To Grow Your Own Coffee Tree

Make your houseplants serve both form and function by growing a coffee tree in your living room. Coffee makes for a hardy indoor plant that might even provide enough beans for a cup or two of joe.

The coffee plant (*Coffea arabica*) produces glossy green leaves. It boasts a compact growth habit, making it well-suited to pots. They also aren't as rare as people assume. You'll find coffee trees for sale in larger nurseries and houseplant catalogs.

Coffee plants do best in well-draining, slightly acidic potting soil (adding peat moss works well). Keep the plants moist but not soggy by thoroughly watering them every week or two. Never let the soil dry out completely.

Keep your coffee plant in a warm (70 to 80 F) room with bright, indirect light. Coffee is an understory plant, so it does best without direct sunlight. Too much light will brown the leaves. Higher temperatures will promote faster growth but hurt coffee production, as the cherries need to ripen at a slow, steady pace. Consider moving your coffee plant outdoors when the weather is consistently above 86 F. Otherwise, it's best left indoors.

A daily misting will boost humidity, as can putting the pot in a shallow pebble-filled tray. Placing a humidifier nearby can also work.

Coffee plants benefit from balanced fertilizers. You can limit feedings to four times a year with a diluted liquid fertilizer. Likewise, pruning should happen in the spring. Though the trees easily reach over 25 ft. tall in the wild, pruning keeps them under 6 ft.—often much smaller. The goal is to encourage dense, bushy growth. Remove any old, dead, and bare branches and leaves growing directly from the bottom of the trunk. You'll encourage dense, bushy growth by cutting the stems at a 45-degree angle about 1/4 in. above a leaf joint.

Keep the tree alive for 3 to 5 years, and you'll soon notice small, fragrant white flowers dotting the branches. They typically bloom between April and May, with the



Photo courtesy of FastGrowingTrees

**Keep the tree alive for 3 to 5 years, and you'll soon notice small, fragrant white flowers dotting the branches. They typically bloom between April and May, with the flowers lasting a month or longer.**

flowers lasting a month or longer. If you're growing *Coffea arabica*, these blooms may turn into small reddish-black pods called cherries. Other varieties won't produce fruit without access to pollinating insects.

Each cherry contains two coffee beans. They're ripe and ready for harvest once they've turned entirely red. You can expect a handful or two per plant, a little short of the 4,000 beans required for a pound of roasted coffee. Let them dry in a single layer in a space with plenty of ventilation, tossing them at least once a day to prevent the bottoms from rotting. Within 2 weeks, you should be able to slough off the leather skin and pulp to access the pale green beans inside.

You can roast the beans at home in a hot, dry wok, stirring constantly until they reach an even brown—don't let them burn! Once cooled, you can grind the beans and brew them to your preference.

Coffee trees are available from many online retailers such as Amazon or www.fast-growing-trees.com. Prices vary by size and average \$30 to \$60 for small potted trees.



**Hoist's boom swings right and left to put the stone in place and can also be flipped back over the cab and secured in place when not needed.**

## Hoist Helps Move Headstones

Moving and setting headstones is much easier for cemetery workers since John Herren modified a hoist for a small tractor. At 92, he's always up for a challenge to repurpose or make useful items out of scrap materials as seen in past FARM SHOW articles (Ex: Cub Cadet cab, Vol. 38, No. 1; pickup steps, Vol. 42, No. 5).

For the headstone project, he started with a hoist that was donated by someone because it was bigger than they needed. Since the winch lifts up to 3,000 lbs., it can easily handle double headstones that weigh about 400 lbs. The challenge was mounting the hoist so it wouldn't tip the small Kubota B7500 tractor.

"I ran 4-in. square tubing under the tractor to set the hoist on. It's about 10 ft. long and mounted under the transmission," Herren says.

He supported the hoist with 6-in. channel

iron around the vertical part of the hoist, and he added a second winch to pull in the tongs that hold the headstone to rest on the bars that he added.

"I made several holes in the [tongs'] arms to adjust for any size stone," Herren says.

The hoist's boom swings right and left to put the stone in place and can also be flipped back over the cab and secured in place when not needed. The person who takes care of the cemetery tested it, and it worked well, Herren says. The modified hoist will save time and labor compared to the tractor forks used in the past.

It'll also come in handy for lifting other items up to about 500 lbs., Herren says.

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