

Made-It-Myself Grain Bag Cap Keeps Rodents Out

Joe Doerr of Swartz Creek, Mich., created a rodent-resistant grain bag cage.

“What started all this was a need for long-term grain storage,” says Doerr. “I was asked to grow buckwheat for a friend who processes it into buckwheat flour. He doesn’t go through it that fast, so I knew I’d be storing the stuff for at least a year, maybe two. And like with most farms, storage space is at a premium.”

Rodents quickly took advantage. “I just got so tired of the mice being inside the grain bags,” says Doerr. “These bags aren’t made for long-term storage—the mice have too much time to chew them. I’ve found three generations of mice living in one bag before!”

Doerr came up with the idea of putting a cap over the top of the bag where the material is thinnest and then using strings to tie up the bag. “The cap I had in mind consisted of a 48-in. square frame covered with hardware cloth. Then, I thought that 8-in. pieces cascading down from each side would be enough to cover the entire top of the bag.” He had his friend and hired hand Al Verhaeghe put it together. “I design, and he builds.”

Their first attempt had 8 in. sides and succeeded in covering the top but left very little wire to wrap a binder strap around. “For the second frame, we stayed with the 48-in. square top and went to 12-in. sides, but it still left very little room for the strap,” says Doerr. “While testing the frame on a grain bag full of wheat from last year, we noticed holes near the bottom of another bag and decided we needed to cover the entire bag. That meant two frames and longer wire for the sides.”

When the bags were full, they stood almost 4 ft. tall. This meant they needed sides to be at least 24 in. from the top and bottom to cover the entire thing, which created overlap in the center. “That’s not a bad thing because this is where the binder strap would go, and we could use one per bag instead of two,” says Doerr. “One benefit of this project was that



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we could use up several old 2 by 4s from previous projects.”

At this point, they had a top and bottom with 24-in. sides. “We put the bottom half on a pallet and used the front-end loader to put the bag in place,” he says. “Then we placed the top on it and attached the binder strap around the middle. There was a gap around the corners, so we looped some extra wire around each side and tightened them to seal the gap.”

Doerr and Verhaeghe are impressed with the functionality of their grain bag cage so far. “We’ve already built five of them,” says Doerr. “Will it work as a cure for all the rodent problems? Maybe not. But it definitely takes them longer to chew their way inside the grain bags, and that’s what I was looking for.”

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Al Verhaeghe (ajverhaeghe@hotmail.com).



Harvey says the combine cab offers an excellent overhead view of the flail head as he cuts his hedges.

Shop-Built Self-Propelled Hedge Cutter

The sight of a broken-down, 30-year-old Claas Dominator 86 and a cast-aside McConnell PA97 hedge trimmer inspired Dorset/Hampshire area farmer Philip Harvey to combine the two machines into a single, self-propelled hedge cutter.

Harvey began his project by towing the inoperable combine to his farmyard and steam cleaning a thick layer of debris and oil-soaked material from the machine, as previous attempts at using an oxy-acetylene torch for demolition had caused small fires. He then removed the combine’s elevator gearbox and threshing gear, leaving only the chassis, cab, and still-working engine.

Since the cab was at the front, Harvey initially positioned the hedge cutter there for better visibility of the hedge and flail head, but the power unit was extremely front-end heavy. After some design attempts, he devised a new plan, cutting the combine in half behind the engine bay and scrapping the rear-end pieces. He installed two large RSJ beams to the front header mounts of the combine, attached the rear axle, and added a base mount as reinforcement. The rear axle retained its original steering pipes, which Harvey rerouted to the optimal front position.

When satisfied with the now nearly 10-ft. shorter unit, he positioned the McConnell PA97 hedge cutter in front of the cab.

Harvey explains this was difficult, requiring plenty of trial and error and measuring and double-checking to settle the cutter level and

balance before welding and securing it to the RSJs. The final positioning left room for the trimmer’s breakback ram in the transport position.

Next, he rebuilt and reassembled the trimmer’s control box and routed it to the cab. The spool block was mounted on a beam under the cab. An old, scrapped PZ drum mower supplied a gearbox and universal joints, which Harvey fitted to the Claas power unit, rotating them 180 degrees to run the pto and trimmer hydraulic pump.

He retained the combine’s hydraulic system and transmission and plumbed the trimmer’s breakback ram into the header control system. The cab entry steps were relocated to the rear, and a short catwalk was added for cab access.

The 120-hp. Perkins 6-cyl. engine fired up on Harvey’s first attempt. With the machine nearly 9 ft. wide, it’s completely stable even when the cutter arm is extended to full reach.

Harvey says the combine cab offers an excellent overhead view of the flail head as he cuts his hedges. The machine steers easily due to the front-axle configuration.

The Class power unit was free, and the McConnell trimmer cost Harvey £400. His other main investment was a package of welding rods.

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Easy Skid Hitch Works In Tight Spaces

The May Wes Skid Hitch makes moving trailers with a skid loader possible. “If you’re tired of moving trailers around with a tractor or a pickup, get the skid hitch,” says company representative Eric Bates. “It attaches right to the front end of your skid loader for a convenient alternative.”

May Wes is a division of Pride Solutions of Hutchinson, Minn. The company was founded in 1972 by Mavis and Wesley Bruns, a farming couple devoted to creating slick and durable field equipment made from ultra-high molecular weight polyethylene (UHMW).

The skid hitch makes it possible to utilize a 2-in. standard receiver and ball hitch (not included). It’s designed for a universal fit and will slip over most skid loader attachments. “The great thing about this skid hitch is that you can get into such tight corners that are tricky with a pickup, tractor, even a forklift,” says Bates. “It allows for quick, easy hookup to move any trailer of any size to any corner of your property.”

Though the Skid Hitch is lightweight and easy to install and remove, it has a 1,000 lb. tongue weight rating. That’s an upgrade from the previous version, which only had an 800 lb. rating. Still, the hitch is small enough to fit in a truck toolbox when not in use. It retails



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for \$195 on the May Wes website. You can also use the Dealer Locator Map to track down in-person dealers.

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Gardien Products’ plant stand is adjustable to hold a range of planter sizes.

Adjustable Stands Fit Many Planters

Gardien Products has a versatile plant stand designed to securely hold planters of various sizes, both indoors and outdoors. The adjustable stand comes in two sizes: one for planters 12 to 16 in. in diameter, supporting up to 75 lbs. and a larger version for planters 16 to 22 in., supporting up to 125 lbs.

“There was nothing like it on the market,” says Peter Ogilvie, VP of Marketing at Gardien. “Our stand is adjustable for a perfect fit, and its design significantly reduces the risk of tipping.”

The stand features a rounded thumbscrew head and a chamfered slot for self-leveling, with locking teeth to ensure stability. Planters are held 10 to 14 in. off the ground, and the stand is constructed from powder-coated steel

and die-cast aluminum for outdoor durability. It also folds flat for easy storage and shipping.

Gardien has designed the stand with aesthetics in mind, offering neutral finishes like black, hammered bronze, brass and silver to suit various décor styles. Retailing between \$40 and \$100, the stands are available on Amazon, in-store at Ace Hardware and Gardener’s Supply Co., and through Gardien’s website, along with a range of other garden products.

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