

Ag World



Photo courtesy The Country Today

Madson says the pickup makes a neat tree house for his 13-year-old son Luke.

WEDGED BETWEEN TWO TREES 30 FT. UP

What's That Pickup Doing Up There?

An old pickup wedged between two trees about 30 ft. up in the air has left a lot of people scratching their heads with wonder along a rural highway near Clinton, Wis.

The bottom of the pickup bolts to an angle iron framework mounted between the trees.

"People stop every day to take photos of it. Others honk as they drive by," says Mark Madson, who hired a crane to lift the 1959 Chevrolet Fleetside pickup up between the two trees last spring. "It's an eye-catcher that makes a neat tree house for my 13-year-old son Luke. On windy days it rocks and rolls quite a bit which is kind of a thrill. It's easy to make believe you're out driving around, yet it's mounted so securely we don't worry about it ever falling.

"I bought the pickup intending to restore it but then I got the idea to mount it in the tree. Luke climbs up to it on steel pegs inserted into the trees. There isn't room to open the doors so he gets in through the driver's window. We leave the window

open so it sometimes gets a little wet inside. Before we lifted the pickup into place, we redid the interior, repainting it and adding a new seat cover.

"The trees are in good shape and I added 15 tons of soil where the ground slopes away from the trees to reinforce the roots. Actually, both trees are stronger now than they were before because I trimmed away all the big branches below the pickup. Wind resistance is greatly reduced."

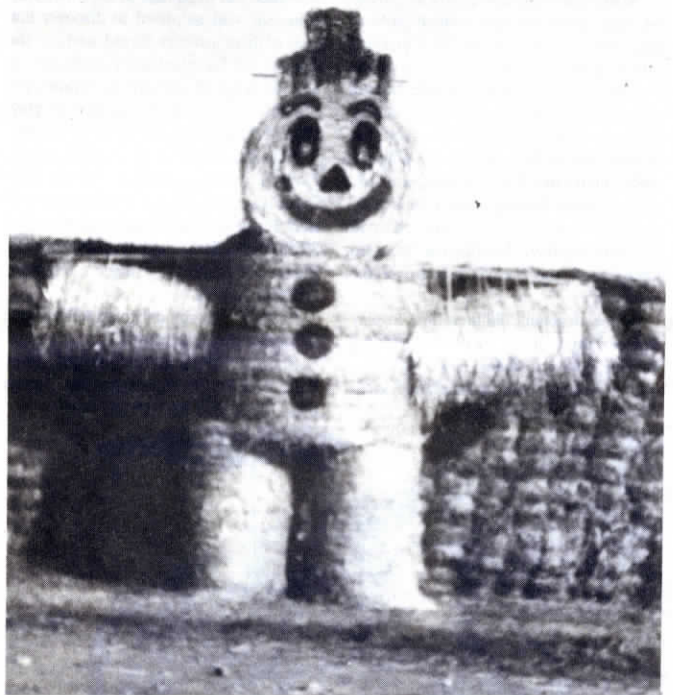
Madson bolted 3 by 3 by 8-in. angle irons between the trees. Before lifting the pickup into the trees, he removed the engine and transmission to reduce weight. He found the exact balance point on the pickup, then drilled a hole through the roof, seat, and floor and inserted a 6-ft. long, 3/4-in. dia. threaded steel rod through it and into a cross member on the pickup frame. The top of the rod was fitted with a hook to lift the truck.

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Chevrolet Engine "Weathervane"

"It's a one-of-a-kind weathervane that gets a lot of second looks," says Mark Madson, Clinton, Wis., who mounted a Chevrolet 427 big block 8-cyl. engine - equipped with a 6-71 blower air intake system and 400 automatic car transmission - on top of a 15-ft. high steel pole in his yard. A Chevrolet "bow tie" insignia, mounted on a steel rod behind the transmission, serves as the weathervane tail.

The engine mounts on a thrust bearing that's bolted to the bottom of the engine block at its balance point. "The bearing lets the engine turn effortlessly in the wind," says Madson. "I mounted the radiator fan backward and removed the seal from the water pump to to reduce the drag."



"Bale man" rests against a large stack of square bales which helps stabilize it.

MADE FROM ROUND, RECTANGULAR BALES

20-Ft. Tall "Bale Man"

This 20-ft. tall giant "bale man" built by Dennis and Richard Kuschak and their families attracted a steady stream of sightseers last winter taking photos and getting out to take a closer look.

"We just did it to have fun," says Dennis. "We live close to a highway so it can be seen from at least a half mile away. It rests against a large stack of square bales which helps stabilize it. One day high winds knocked the head off, but we were able to put it right back on."

The Kuschaks used two 5 by 6-ft. bales for the stomach and head, eight 2 1/2-ft. dia. bales for the arms and legs (two bales for each arm and leg), and three small rectangular bales for the hat. Each pair of bale arms

is held in place by a 10-ft. long, 1-in. dia. steel rod that extends about 3 ft. into the center bales. A 16-ft. long wooden plank across the top of the center bales provides additional support (ropes are wrapped around the plank and bales). They used lengths of rebar to tie the "hat" bales together, pushing rods vertically through the bales and into the head. They painted on the eyes, nose, and mouth, as well as buttons.

They made the 2 1/2-ft. dia. round bales in a regular round baler by tying the small bales manually.

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