



Susie says that no two pieces of her handmade willow furniture are ever exactly alike.

MADE FROM "FREE" WILLOW SAPPLINGS

Farm Wife Makes "No-Cost" Furniture

By June Huffman

Susie Rothert, Elmore, Ohio creates her own willow furniture. Although to most people they appear to be rustic, valuable antiques, they cost virtually nothing to construct since they're made from "free" green willow sapplings.

Susie got started in her unusual craft three years ago when she saw a willow chair featured in a magazine. Studying the picture, she decided that she could make her own, saving a sizable sum. After making a piece or two, friends began requesting her woody creations, and a new home industry was born.

To gather the willow needed for her project, Susie drives a pickup along country roads cutting and hauling the wild willow that grows along ditch banks or around swamps, taking only what she can use before the material dries out. Several varieties of willows grow in the U.S., but as long as the plants are pliable, providing a good bend, they'll work satisfactorily, she says.

The willow sapplings, 6 to 7 ft. long and ranging in size from 1/2 to 3 in. in dia., are pruned of their leaves, then sorted and stacked in the barn according to size for easy accessibility when assembly begins.

Using a saw on the thicker, woodier pieces, Susie first constructs a solid square frame of four legs for the furniture. No measurements are taken. She simply does it all by eye, sometimes using one chair leg to measure another.

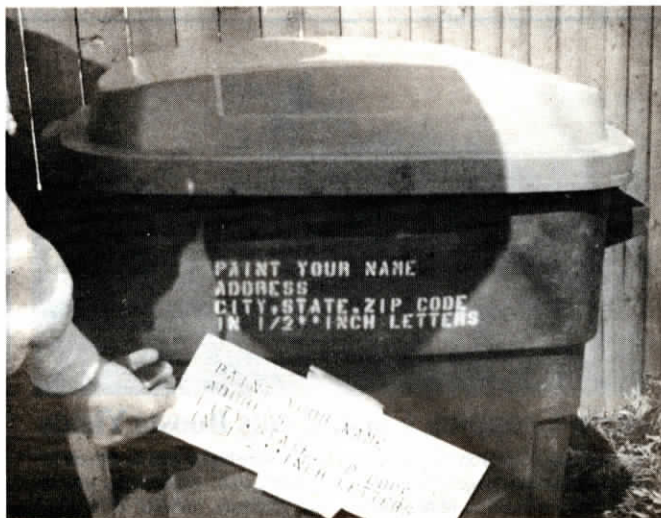
Once the framework is completed and solidly braced, the piece takes on its individual personality. Carefully bending and twisting the willow lengths to make them pliant for curved designs, Susie hammers and nails the strips into position. No special tools are required other than spiraled nails that are used because they won't pull out. Glue is never used, as is done in most modern furniture manufacturing, because it won't adhere to the green stalks.

During the natural drying process the furniture contracts, making tightly knitted joints that will be durable a hundred years from now. Finally, as a preservation measure, the furniture is rubbed with linseed oil which gives it a warm brown rustic glow.

Susie has constructed a variety of furniture styles, with no two pieces ever exactly alike. Most frequently she makes plant stands, rockers, straight chairs, tables, lounges, and shelves. Prices range from \$100 or less for small tables to \$200 for a loveseat or a dining room table with a glass top.

Generally the pieces are sold as groupings or accent pieces. However, she recently got an order for an entire room of furniture.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Susie Rothert, 1084 S. Opfer-Lentz, Elmore, Ohio 43416 (ph 419 862-2519).



Custom-cut stencils have 4 lines with a maximum of 22 characters per line.

LETS YOU EASILY "ID" EQUIPMENT

Custom Stencils

If you've been looking for a way to identify equipment, or put up an easy-to-see caution sign, you might want to try made-to-order custom stencils.

Gary L. Matteson custom-cuts stencils with a maximum of 4 lines per stencil with 22 characters per line. Each character is 1/2 in. high, cut out of heavy-duty oiled stencil board that can be reused indefinitely.

Matteson says farmers use stencils to ID farm machinery, tools, gas cans, garbage

pails, buildings, bins, and anything else with a surface that can be painted. Stencils can also be customized to make caution signs around dangerous equipment, or to specify maintenance information.

Stencils sell for \$3.00 apiece or three for \$7.00.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Gary L. Matteson, Stencilcraft, Box 104, Morris, Ill. 60450 (ph 815 942-1807).

Inside Rain Gauge

You don't even have to step outside to see how much it rained, thanks to the new Inside Rain Gauge from Nunnikhoven Mfg., of Mediapolis, Iowa.

You mount the collector funnel on the edge of the roof away from trees or other tall obstructions. Clear plastic tubing (1/4-in.) runs from the collector funnel to the gauge located inside the house, garage or barn. You have to drill a 1/4 in. hole through the wall or window frame to thread the plastic

hose from outside to inside. "It's easy to see, easy to read and easy to install," says the manufacturer. "You can leave it up year around since there's no danger of freezing."

Sells for \$5.95, plus \$1.50 for shipping. Comes with 14 ft. of 1/4-in. clear plastic tubing.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Nunnikhoven Mfg., Highway 61 S., P.O. Box 580, Mediapolis, Iowa 52637 (ph 319 394-3189).

USE IT AS A WHEELBARROW OR A TRACTOR-DRAWN CART

Two-Wheeled "Qualabarro" Solves Hauling Problems

A new hybrid wheelbarrow called the "Qualabarro" combines the strength and capacity of a garden tractor-drawn cart with the versatility and ease of a wheelbarrow, says inventor James Johnson, of Cologne, Minn.

You can use the Qualabarro as a hand cart or, with a quick conversion, pull it behind your garden tractor or all-terrain vehicle. Either way, the rig can be used to haul sand, dirt, sod, concrete, leaves, firewood, feed, manure and so forth. The rugged 14 ga. welded steel frame permits loads of over 500 lbs.

Equipped with two large 26 dia. spoke wheels with pneumatic tires, the Qualabarro moves effortlessly through soft

ground and snow, says Johnson. "The twin wheels, journaled on all bearings, make it easier to balance and transport than single wheel conventional wheelbarrows," he notes.

To convert from hand to tractor-drawn operation, you simply remove a latching rod, rotate the handle downward and then replace the rod into lower holes. A hopper extension is available for bulky materials, such as leaves and firewood.

The Qualabarro sells for \$139, and the optional side extensions for \$39.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Johnson Min-Till Inc., Cologne, Minn. 55322 (ph 612 466-5979).



Extension sides are available for hauling leaves, firewood and other bulky materials.