

Reader Letters



there's nothing that can slip. The boards that form the ramp are spaced about 1 in. apart. There's a 2 by 4 running lengthwise down the middle so it'll hold a lot of weight. **(Pete Peters, Box 166, Osler, Sask., Canada S0K 3A0 ph 306 239-2045)**



Your readers may get a kick out of the boot jacks I make that look like giant metal bugs. They're made of heavy plate steel and bent rod. I built a jig to hold all parts prior to welding them into place. The bugs sell for \$35 apiece. **(William Winter, Rt. 2, Box 80, Tower Hill, Ill. 62571 ph 217 567-3191)**

I noticed that the story in your last issue (Vol. 25, No. 5) on attachments for down corn did not include my "quick feed" fingers that are designed to pull in broken, fluffy stalks. The idea is to bolt flat metal strips to the auger flighting. The strips make the feeder auger more aggressive so it will grab stalks and pull them in. The strips extend about 3/8 of an inch past



the edge of the flighting.

The strips have even more benefits than we originally thought. We've found that the aggressive feeding of the auger will help harvest under any conditions. They eliminate overfeeding the feederhouse, which could cause the chain to stretch. The strips cause the crop to feed in across the full width of the feederhouse so that the cylinder bars last longer. Also, the combine runs smoother and burns less fuel. **(Robert Dunton, 26494 E. Co. Rd. 1900 N., Topeka, Ill. 61567 ph 309 256-2871)**

If you're looking for a way to put up Christmas lights, you might want to check out the wrought iron Christmas light displays that my husband Leo and I have made. Over the past 12 years we've



designed and built more than 70 different Christmas units. We display all of them every year.

The objects are made out of 1/2-in. wide by 1/8-in. thick flat metal. He cuts out and lays out all the pieces and then welds them together. Some parts of the ornaments are 3-dimensional.

A lot of cars drive by to see the lights. **(Mrs. L.J. Grasam, 64764 County Road 16, Fairfax, Minn. 55332)**

We've had a big response to the story on our Super Weeder grass, weed, and brush trimmer replacement head for gas-powered trimmers (Vol. 24, No. 3). It consists of a circular steel head fitted with two freely rotating, 4-in. long, carbon fiber reinforced blades that bolt on in place of the original plastic head on most string trimmers. We've now replaced the carbon fiber reinforced blades with metal



blades that are very light in weight and super strong and long wearing. They can be resharpened with a grinder or a file.

The blades are available 1/4 or 3/8 in. thick. **(Ed Silver, Super Weeder, 5001 Tobacco Road, LaGrange, Ky. 40031 ph 502 228-9037; E-mail: superweed3@aol.com; Website: www.superweeder.com)**

I wanted to thank you for the article you published on my vacuum cotton picker (Vol. 25 Issue 3). I received a number of phone calls and letters expressing interest and support.

I spent most of the spring and summer refining and testing the design. We've been in the field with prototype units this fall and the results are very encouraging. We calculate that it's picking about 75% of the cotton, including some of the immature bolls.

We've determined that making a few more changes in it, like increasing the fan size and improving the air balance inside the head, will allow us to pick at least as much cotton as any head now available.

A number of machinery manufacturers have shown interest in it and we are still in talks with some of those. I'm hopeful that by harvest time next year, we'll have some complete heads we can use for demonstration purposes at farm shows and field days. **(Randy Thompson, 8794 Denham Road, Sycamore, GA 31790 (ph) 229 831-4795; E-mail: dianet@sufsouth.com).**

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Vibrating Pitchfork Doubles As Sifter

Brent Butts of Holly, Mich., works at a horse farm where they use a lot of pine shavings in their stalls. Pine shavings stay drier than straw so they're often recycled by sifting them out with a pitchfork. However, the job requires a lot of time and work.

He made the job easier by attaching a small battery-operated motor to the base of a standard pitchfork that was equipped with poly tines and an aluminum handle. He attached an offset weight - made by connecting a number of half-washers together - to a shaft at one end of the motor. The motion created by the rotating washers causes the tines to vibrate, causing the shavings to quickly fall to the floor.

"It works great and saves a lot of time," says Butts. "It takes only about two seconds for the shavings to fall through. On average, it reduces the time needed to clean out a stall by at least five minutes. It also saves a lot of bedding, because otherwise most people don't want to take the time to sift out the shavings. I've never tried using it on straw, but I don't think it would work because straw



Arrow points to small electric motor that shakes tines on fork.

gets too intertwined. I used JB Weld to attach the motor to the base of the pitchfork and also to fasten the washers together. A wire runs up through the handle to a switch about six inches from the end of the handle. I used a common 9-volt battery and a 9 to 18-volt motor which I bought at Radio Shack."

Butts says he's looking for a manufacturer. Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Brent Butts, 2209 Houser Rd., Holly, Mich. 48442 (ph 248 634-1323).



More than 6,400 nickels were used to make this 7 1/2-ft. long sofa.

Welder Turns Coins Into "Art You Can Sit On"

An artist at heart and by education, Johnny Swing turned to welding to make a living for his family. He's a licensed structural steel welder and has worked on high-rise buildings. He now runs a welding shop in Brookline, Vermont, where he repairs farm equipment as well as logging and construction machinery.

While his metal shop work pays the bills, Swing stays in touch with his artistic side by creating what he calls "functional art", including chairs and sofas mad out of coins.

He started with a chair made of pennies. "People look at pennies these days as nuisances. I decided to try to make these nearly worthless coins into something of value."

He cast the form for his penny chair in plaster and then welded the pennies in place over the form. Once he had covered the form with pennies, it was removed and legs were added. It's not only a functional chair, but also a piece of art.

After making a couple of penny chairs, Swing decided to try something bigger, so he moved up to a nickel sofa. Using the same process, he cast a plaster form 7 1/2 by 3 1/2 ft. and covered it with 6,400 nickels. After the form was removed, he added stainless steel trusses behind the nickels to support them. While it's as large as a sofa and comfortable to sit on, the nickel sofa weighs only about 100 lbs.



After welding coins into place over a plastic form, he adds a frame underneath.

Swing says the nickel sofas have gotten a lot of attention. The first one sold right away. His second one was recently shipped to a buyer in Great Britain. He's currently working on the third, which, he says, is already sold.

He's not planning to mass-produce his coin furniture, but he'd like to make more.

Swing says he did check with U.S. Treasury Secret Service agents prior to beginning his endeavor, just to make sure he wasn't breaking any laws. Going price for a nickel sofa is in the \$15,000 to \$18,000 range.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Johnny Swing, 191 Putney Mt. Road, Brookline, Vt. 05345 (ph 802 365-7686; fax 802 365-4902; Website: www.fasterfineart.com).