

Spear-Shooting Trap Kills Moles

"I've never had too much luck with the mole traps that are on the market, and neither have the neighbors and friends I've talked to," says Max Robertson of Bloomington, Ind.

So he built his own mole trap that shoots a sharpened steel rod at trespassing moles. The trap consists of some 3/4-in. metal water pipe with a spring-loaded "spear" inside that's released by a conventional rat trap.

"It looks like a tire pump with a rod sticking out the top. The big trap is very easily triggered and this sensitivity contributes to the success of the trap because as soon as the mole starts pushing any dirt up from its tunnel, the trigger is set into action," says Robertson.

Here's how it works:

There's a heavy metal spring inside that's fastened to the sharpened metal rod. The spring is stretched into the "loaded" position by the handle on top. A pin that goes through a hole in the pipe keeps it cocked. The rat trap connects to the pin and also to a trigger

that goes down the pipe into the tunnel.

Once the rat trap is set, it can be triggered by the slightest upward motion of dirt. The rat trap knocks the pin out of the hole, which releases the spring-loaded spear, which shoots down into the mole.

"The key thing about this trap design is that it can be triggered instantly by very little movement from a mole, once it's tripped," he says.

The base of the trap is made from various plumbing components that hold the trap up straight so it straddles the mole's tunnel.

Robertson says there are two ways to set his trap. You can put it up against the tunneled-up dirt, so if the mole shoves any dirt upward, the trap is triggered. Or you can set it over an open tunnel. The disadvantage of this method is that success depends on which direction the mole is traveling.

Robertson says the trap cost him only about \$10 to make. If there's interest, he would consider making the traps for sale.



Top handle on trap is raised, left, to cock sharpened spear inside 3/4-in. dia. pipe. Rat trap, right, connects to trigger that runs down to bottom of trap. When mole activates trigger, rat trap instantly releases spring-loaded spear.

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Powered Ladder Gives Easy Access To Loft

When James Howle, Jr. was buying steel to build a new shop, the salesman pointed out that it wouldn't cost much more to make the building higher, so he did. Now that extra space provides low cost storage for his sideline welding and fabrication business.

"I thought it would be great to have a storage loft above the shop, but I needed a way to get up to it without blocking entrances or taking up valuable floor space," recalls Howle.

His solution was a drop-down stairway. With two small children, Howle wanted to make sure the stairs were both safe to climb and also secure when out of the way.

Howle built a dropdown stairway on the

ground beginning with 5-in. diameter iron for side rails. Stair treads are extruded steel with a diamond-shaped gripping surface, available in 10 and 20-ft. lengths.

"I welded angle iron clips to each side of the stair rails to attach and support the stair treads," explains Howle.

The completed stairway is 17 ft. in length and numbers 15 steps. He attached the upper end of it to the all-steel loft with a piano hinge made by welding short pieces of 3/4-in. pipe to the loft and the upper end of the stairway. Then he drove a steel rod through the pieces of pipe to form a hinge.

To lift the stairs, he welded steel plates to either side of the second step. Holes in the

plates accept a short length of pipe with a pad eye welded at its center point. Keys in the ends of the pipe make it easy to remove the pipe when the stairway is down. An electric hoist attached to a roof beam powers a cable that raises the stairs.

"I have a double key switch for controlling the hoist, so I don't have to worry about it being accidentally lowered when kids are in the way," says Howle.

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Drop-down stairway is 17 ft. long and has 15 steps. Cable disconnects once ladder is down.



Freightliner cab has bunk behind front seats, a 120-decibel horn on top, and a "western hauler" bed on back fitted with a gooseneck ball.

Freightliner Pickup

Wannabe trucker, Alvin Kern spent his working life as a business executive. Once he retired, he decided to scratch his trucker itch by building a "Freightliner pickup".

"It cost about the same as a loaded 3/4-ton," says Kern about the truck, which has a Freightliner cab instead of a standard pickup cab.

It's powered by a 6.4-liter turbo I-6 Mercedes MBE 906 engine. At 13,000 lbs., and pumping out 230 hp and 660 ft. of torque at 1200 rpm's, he wasn't going to be blown off the road by just anybody.

"I hit 80 mph at only 1,900 rpms," says Kern.

He decked out the cab with air ride seats, air brakes, satellite radio and more. A bunk behind the front seats is perfect for overnight excursions, and his 150-gal. fuel tank means he doesn't have to stop very often to refuel.

Just to make sure he wouldn't be overlooked in heavy traffic, he added a set of 120 decibel horns on top.

To finish his oversized pickup, Kern mounted a 2001 Dodge Dualie bed in back. This later caused problems because when he mounted the pickup bed on the frame of the Freightliner he didn't realize how much the truck frame flexed.

After the third set of repairs, Kern replaced the pickup bed with a "western hauler" bed with a 30,000-lb. gooseneck ball built by Jarret Manufacturing of Garnet, Kan. The new bed has stayed in place, and its 2,600-lb. weight has improved the Freightliner's ride.

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Bucket carries 2 1/2 cu. ft. of material. It fits on front hitch of Deere 425, 445, 455 and new X models.

Lawn Tractor Bucket

Avery Taylor and his dad, Larry, enjoy working on projects together. So it's not surprising that their new front bucket for Deere garden tractors is the result of a joint effort.

The bucket fits the front hitch on Deere 425, 445, 455, and the new X models.

The Taylors, who live in Tipton, Mich., made the first bucket for their own use. Then they started making them for relatives, friends and others.

The 48-in. wide bucket has a capacity of 2 1/2 cu. ft.

"Deere makes a full-sized loader with higher lifting capacity, but it doesn't attach to the front hitch and is much more expensive, at around \$3,500, installed," Avery says. "Ours retails for \$1,199 and you can drive right up to it and quickly latch on to it."

Taylor says the unit is made with high qual-

ity materials and has a durable paint finish. It comes with twin 1 1/2-in. dia. piston hydraulic cylinders and conveniently placed grease points for easy lubrication. In addition, there's a one year warranty on workmanship and materials.

Taylor says the bucket lifts about 12 in. off the ground, and it works well for scooping, scraping or hauling. You can pile things up to 2 to 3 ft. high, with no problem, and you can pile dirt higher if you go up a ramp with your front tires.

"On a properly weighted tractor, you can lift 500 lbs.," he points out.

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