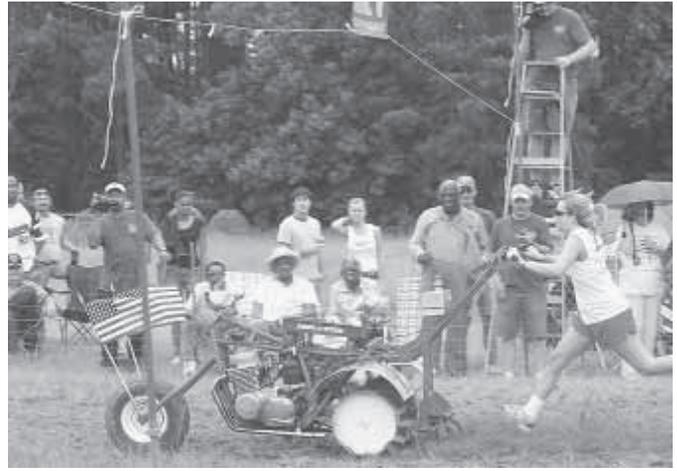




Roto tiller racing has become a popular sport in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. The machines can reach speeds of more than 22 mph.



Souped-up machines are called "hot rods of sod". They're equipped with motorcycle and ATV engines, and most have specially designed tines that are built for speed.

Roto Tiller Racing Features "Hot Rods Of Sod"

The annual "World Championship Rotary Tiller Race" held in Emerson, Arkansas, attracts hot rod tillers capable of reaching speeds of over 22 mph. Contestants come from all over Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas.

"We're not talking about garden-variety tillers," says organizer Bill Dailey. "These are souped up machines that some like to call 'hot rods of sod.' We call the racers 'pilots,' and our divisions include Dirt Slingers, which are built from scratch; Rip Roarers, which are modified for speed; and simple stock tillers. There are categories for men, women, and even kids aged 10 and under using 2 hp

flower garden models."

Some of the modified tillers that compete have motorcycle and ATV engines and most have specially designed tines that are built for speed. Often contestants come prepared with one set of tines for mud and another for dry-ground racing.

The contests are between two entrants at a time on a 200-ft. long plowed track.

"Tiller racing has become a family tradition for some, and they actually form racing teams that include pilots, mechanics and timed trials before the championships."

The annual race began in 1990 and is held

the last Saturday in June. It's just one aspect of the Emerson community's "PurpleHull Pea Festival," an event named after a backyard vegetable that's hugely popular in the area.

"Now that the festival is 15 years old, the demand for Emerson PurpleHull Peas has grown to the point that some farmers in the area are now selling peas commercially, and one is even gearing up to ship Emerson PurpleHulls all over the nation," says Dailey. "Usually a festival derives its name and theme from a local industry, but here, a local industry is developing from a festival."

PurpleHull peas are often referred to as

"pinkeye purplehull peas" and are close cousins to the less tasty black-eyed peas.

The World Championship Rotary Tiller Race is sponsored by Weyerhaeuser and includes cash and plaques to first place winners.

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Antler Artist Adds Beauty To Nature

What could be more natural than a nature scene carved out of a product found in nature? That's how Graeme MacKendrick feels about his art work carved out of moose and elk antlers, and cow and sheep horns.

The Scottish-born craftsman says antler carving is common in Scotland, where he learned it from his father.

It's very difficult getting the raw materials for his work, he says. He sometimes makes an exchange with hunters he meets at craft shows, whereby he offers to do a carving for them if they will provide him with a certain number of antlers they've harvested or found. He also gets a few from a zoo where he was once employed.

MacKendrick says his moose antler carvings are meant to be hung on the wall or to stand on a table. Some of the scenes he has created include herons flying through the clouds, a moose walking through the woods, a large bear with a mountain goat in the background and polar bears with a kayaker.

He uses a scroll saw to cut out the main shape, and then a hand-held drill to carve detail. Dentist bits and diamond bits are tools that provide the finishing touches.

"I first began carving about 20 years ago and, as I go along, I learn more techniques that make the work a bit easier," MacKendrick says. "It takes me about a month to complete a large moose antler carving."

Not one to waste his raw material, MacKendrick uses the cut out pieces to make letter openers, Christmas tree decorations, napkin rings, pendants, earrings and pins.

Elk antlers also make beautiful cribbage boards and he also makes traditional antler buttons, which are popular with Europeans who put them on their woolen sweaters.

Another of his specialties are walking sticks and shepherd's crooks made from spiral-shaped domestic sheep horns, with a hardwood or hazelwood shaft. MacKendrick learned this skill from his 90-year-old father



MacKendrick uses a scroll saw to cut out main shape, and a hand-held drill to carve the details (top). He also makes walking sticks (right).



who lives in England. It takes him about 100 hours to make a sheep horn walking stick.

He first boils the sheep horn to make it pliable enough to untwist. Once it has cooled, he uses dry heat from a propane torch, and a vice to compress the horn and close its hollow end. Next, he sands out the ridges and polishes the horn smooth. More dry heat allows him to make final changes to the horn's shape. A hole is drilled into the end of the horn and the stick shaft is pegged into that hole.

Since elk antler is too big for walking stick use, MacKendrick sometimes uses red deer, fallow deer, reindeer or caribou antler. This is trickier than sheep horn, because the shape can't be manipulated and he has to find ones that already have a suitable contour.

He sells his work each fall at a craft show in Winnipeg, and does custom orders. MacKendrick charges \$60 and up (Canadian) for walking sticks, jewelry is \$20 and up, and moose carvings are \$150 and up.

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Moose antler carvings can be hung on the wall or stood on a table.



We spotted these dressed-up LP tanks this summer at the Empire Farm Days near Seneca, N.Y. They're the handiwork of employees at E&V Energy Company in Cortland and Geneva, N.Y. You can get more information on the company at www.fingerlakes1.com/display/ev.

