



Buckeye Baler lets you vacuum up leaves and compact them into easy-to-handle bales.

## “Vacuum Leaf Baler”

Grover Miller’s “Buckeye Baler” sucks up big piles of leaves and turns them into easy-to-handle small square bales.

“You can vacuum up leaves, pine needles and other lawn and garden debris and compact them into bales that can be used in the spring as mulch,” explains Miller. “I have two models – one for use with a lawn tractor for homeowners, and a larger unit for commercial use, such as golf courses or municipalities.”

The basic design is the same. A vacuum sucks up the leaves and feeds them into the bale chamber. A hydraulic motor drives the plunger to form the bales.

“The smaller unit produces a 16-in. wide, 10-in. high bale,” says Miller. “When it reaches the desired length, the operator activates a hydraulic cylinder that drives a needle up through the bale. The operator then cuts the twine and ties off the bale manually.”

The homeowner-sized unit is hooked to a garden tractor with the vacuum hose mounted to the mower discharge plate. The hose can

also be used freehand to pick up piles of leaves. A 13-hp gas engine provides power for the hydraulics to run the vacuum, the plunger and the needle.

“It produces about 5-gpm flow and 1,800 psi,” says Miller. “I ran a belt pulley off the hydraulic motor for the vacuum unit to get up to 4,000 rpm’s on the vacuum fan.”

Miller’s commercial-sized unit is based on a standard, small square baler, producing an 18-in. wide, 14-in. high bale. It’s sized to be pulled behind a compact tractor. When making the prototype, he used the back end of an old New Holland baler.

“I cut off the bale chamber just ahead of the knoter and butt-welded it to my leaf baler,” he says. “It ties off the bales just like it would a hay bale, and you can set it for whatever length you want.”

Miller mounted a 38-hp gas engine on the baler to power a 26-gpm pump. It is more than sufficient to power the plunger, knoter assembly and the vacuum with its 14-in. diameter flexible hose. The hose can be used



Bales made from leaves, pine needles and other lawn and garden debris make great mulch for gardens.



Commercial-sized baler is sized to be pulled behind a compact tractor and produces bales that measure 18 in. wide by 14 in. high.

freehand or mounted to a pickup attachment. “It could easily run off the pto or hydraulics on a tractor,” explains Miller.

He made several prototypes of his lawn-sized machine before tackling the commercial unit at the request of a local golf course.

“They wanted a pto-powered leaf baler, but the motor made testing and modification easier,” he says.

Miller hesitates to suggest a price for his leaf balers. At 82 years old, the inventor has no intention to manufacture the Buckeye Leaf Baler himself. He’s looking for a firm to do

so and is willing to exchange patent rights for a royalty.

“I’ve had a lot of interest from people wanting to buy one,” he says. “However, with the economy, companies are hesitant to start building them.”

A video of the Buckeye Baler can be seen on YouTube.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Grover Miller, 5712 Riverview Rd., Peninsula, Ohio 44264 (ph 330 620 6209; www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNMIg\_6TaoQ).

## Self-Propelled Manure Spreader

When Linford Larson found a New Idea manure spreader rotting in the woods he decided to restore it in an unusual way. After restoring the floor and sides with wood sawn from trees on his farm, he motorized the spreader. Now it hauls him and friends and family in parades and special events.

“I mounted an 18-hp, UL two-cylinder engine from an old Deere combine in the front and welded a 1969 Ford truck rear end in place of the drive axle,” explains Larson. “I put a reduction gear on the engine and ran a chain drive from it to a 1929 Model A Ford transmission. I then connected the transmission to the rear end with a 3-ft. universal joint.”

To steer the spreader, Larson shortened the pole and then turned the axle around so the pole faced the rear. He mounted an old pontoon boat steering console next to the engine. Wire cables run through the floor to pulleys mounted below and connect to the pole.

“The spreader front axle had individual spindles with tie rods attached to the pole,” explains Larson. “When I turn the steering wheel, the cables pull the pole to one side or another, moving the tie rods.”

Larson hooked up the hydraulic brakes on the truck rear end, controlling the master cylinder with a hand lever. He also uses hydraulics to power a small motor on the spreader beaters. Hydraulic power is provided by a pump he runs off a sprocket on the engine that once powered the combine’s unloading auger.

Larson added an old bus seat for passengers and built a canopy over the double seat. He added directional lights and taillights.

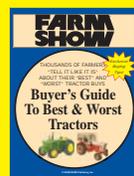
“The engine is a hand crank starter, but it runs like a top,” says Larson. “My grandson and I carried the frame of the rotted spreader into the shop. There was so little left of it. Now we win prizes at parades and shows.”

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Linford Larson, 10647 Wigwam Rd., Rosholt, Wis. 54473 (ph 715 677-3469).

**Linford Larson hauls friends and family members in parades and special events, using an old New Idea manure spreader he converted into a self-propelled unit.**



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