

I also bought a 36-in., pto-driven rototiller to use with it. When a bearing went out I gave this mower to my son. The problem is that we can't find parts for it any more."

Cameron Jantz, Butte, Calif.: "I leased a **RotoZone** Tiller from CalWest Fab, and it saved me time and money (www.calwestfab.com; ph 530 717-3550). Normally I make four passes when preparing fields for planting and furrow irrigation. I make two passes for tillage, one with a land plane to level the field,



and one for laying in the furrows.

"With the RotoZone, I did it all in a single pass. The 2 mph pass with the RotoZone is about half the speed of the passes I would make normally.

"I leased a 15-ft., 8-row unit. The heavy-duty gearboxes are rated at 250 or 300 hp, and the chain drives are built to last.

"I've used it in wheat stubble before planting sunflowers and in sunflower stubble with high residue. A single pass blends even high residue with the soil. It grinds root balls right up. With chisel shanks up front, it really opens up the soil."

John Kilian, Norlina, N.C.: John's the satisfied owner of a **Deere** 5105 4-WD tractor equipped with a 522 front-end loader. "It has excellent traction and handles 2 big round bales with ease."

Richard Baum, Kennan, Wis.: Richard's impressed with his **CSF** electric-operated, 32-bu. feed cart (ph 800 236-7130; www.csfincorporated.com/agricult.htm). "It works well and is easy to service and operate. Saves us a lot of time when feeding our cows."

Robert Musgrave, Burlington, Wis.: "I liked my 1985 **Sachs-Dolmar** 112 chainsaw equipped with an 18-in. bar, but in 2012 I decided to 'upgrade' to a smaller Dolmar 420 model equipped with a 14-in. bar (www.dolmarpowerproducts.com). This new saw never misses a beat."

Boyd D. Crocker, Winfield, Kan.: Boyd likes his **Hustler** Sport 48-in. riding mower equipped with a Honda engine (www.hustlerturf.com). "This mower has no trouble going up and down hills, maneuvers easily around trees and rocks, and has plenty of power. It starts easy and uses a modest amount of gas, and no oil."

W.F. Pepenhagan, Wilson, N.Y.: "I can't start my 2013 **Poulan** high wheel push mower without starting fluid unless the outside air temperature is at least 80 degrees, and then when it does start the engine runs wide open."

Raymond Lapp, Millersburg, Penn.: "I like the 72-in. Steinsammler grapple bucket manufactured by **Burkholder Equipment**, Shippensburg, Penn. (ph 717 532-7337). I use it on my Takeuchi TL140 tracked skid loader. Two years ago we cleared some wooded land to build a house, and used the grapple to do everything from pushing over 10-in. dia. trees to picking up huge rocks. It works especially good for cleaning up brush. It's built like a tank and has 1-in. dia. steel tines. Despite many hours of use it's still in excellent condition."

Phil Carter, New Era, Mich.: "Over the years I've owned several **Cummins** diesel engines including two 5.9L's, a 6.7L, an 88 NT, and an 8.3L. These engines are dependable, start in cold weather, and have plenty of power and torque. I have them in my Dodge 2500 pickups, a Ford 9000 tandem

axle flatbed truck, and Kenworth 300 tandem axle trucks. The engines' inline design makes them easy to service, and they're reasonably fuel efficient. The 88NT and 8.3L have almost 1 million miles on them but are still going strong.

"I use my 2013 **Branson** 3720 forklift in our apple orchards. This forklift offers a low cost alternative to rough terrain forklifts that sell for \$60,000 to \$70,000, but its design and engineering leave a lot to be desired. The 3-speed transmission doesn't have enough gears and should be upgraded to a 4-speed.

"The transmission creeps unless I use the brakes or tap the shuttle."

The forklift had some hydraulic leaks that I finally solved. Shortly after I got it, a steering arm casting broke and the steering arm had to be replaced. Another problem is the transmission creeps unless I use the brakes or tap the shuttle, which is a safety hazard.

"On the plus side, the forklift's diesel engine runs good and starts easy in cold weather. The machine has a short turning radius, and its 2,500-lb. mast can handle a tank of cherries or 2 bins of apples with no problems. However, dealers don't seem to stock a lot of parts and as a result I've had to wait several days for parts."

John Gass, Franklin, Ill.: "Last year I bought an electric chainsaw sharpener from **Harbor Freight** for \$30. Works great."

Leon Boden, Esbon, Kan.: Leon has about 85,000 miles on his 2012 **Dodge** Ram 1500 4-WD crewcab pickup equipped with a 5.7-liter Hemi engine. "It gets 18 to 20 mpg and doesn't use any oil between 8,000-mile oil changes. It rides smooth."

Jim Holt, Cincinnati, Ohio: "My 2012 **Chevrolet** Volt has used less than 30 gal. of gas with just a dab over 20,000 miles. We only use it for local trips. It looks small to me but weighs 500 lbs. more than the 2008 Malibu it replaced. We just plug it in when we drive into the garage. It takes 10 hrs. to charge from zero but we usually have some charge left when we get home so recharging time is generally much shorter. We have not noticed any increase in our electric bills (charging at 110 volts @ 10 amps). The motor only runs if it gets below 20 degrees to augment electric heat, if the batteries run down, or if the gas in the tank has been there for a while. The only downside is that if the weather is very cold, electric range falls to only about 28 miles instead of the normal 35 to 45 miles. GM promises to boost the 2016 Volts to 60 miles on electricity.

"For over-the-road travel, I drive my 2008 **Chevrolet** Hybrid Tahoe, which consistently gets 25-26 mpg at 60 to 65 mph - traveling to Florida with 4 adults and their luggage. Around town it seldom drops below 20 mpg. Even when pulling our loaded tandem trailer (3,500 lbs.) with load we get 15 to 17 mpg. I was ready to buy another but learned Chevy no longer offers the Hybrid Tahoe or Silverado so I extended my warranty out to 100,000 miles or 10 years. So far, only a door lock has needed attention."

Jim Ruen, Lanesboro, Minn.: "Plastic barn window sashes from **Recycled Products** in Monticello, Iowa (Vol. 16, No. 4; ph 319 465-6125) have helped make my old barn look almost new again. The white plastic frames, made from recycled milk, water and detergent bottles, look fresh and clean. They don't chip, can be pressure washed, and are expected to last forever.

"Owner Sue Ballou said her husband Andy

Mini Combine Finds A Market

"The **BOAZ** mini combine has its faults, but it works for small grain plots. It's imported by **EQ Machinery**, Medford, Mass. A friend and I have been growing small grains for bread, cereal and livestock, but harvesting is a problem. The **BOAZ**, with its small size and adjustable height cutter bars, is simple and straightforward with good quality components. It can be used to cut and thresh the grain or as a stationary thresher," says Benjamin Hoffman, Bradford, Maine.



Designed for small grain plots, the **BOAZ** mini combine can be used to cut and thresh grain or as a stationary thresher.

"One problem is that there's no good English language manual available. After a few hours of use, we removed all the guards and covers from the machine, cleaned it thoroughly, and lubricated it. Many grease fittings were loose, and some were missing. Several bolts were loose, and one was missing, while one had no nut. One pulley had a hole for a zerk, but no clearance and had to be replaced.

"The **BOAZ** is a 3-wheel, 11-ft. long machine with a 13 hp gas engine and weighs 948 lbs. The cutting width is just under 2 2/3 ft. and it will harvest about 1/4 acre per hour.

"The lower cutter bar cuts at 4 to 6 in., while the second bar can be raised as high as 42 in. for cutting grain heads. Even at the highest level, cutting tall rye was a problem with the reel pushing stems away. It also collected a lot of chaff with the grain. Adjusting airflow to the thresher for size and weight of grains helped as did adjusting the chaff separator. The latter can be difficult. We hang a cardboard box under the outlet and play with adjustment until grain stops coming out. The **BOAZ** works better with oats and wheat.

"The manufacturer recommends harvesting at full throttle, but we found 1/4 throttle worked best.

was tired of replacing rotted out sashes and started making the frames from high density recycled plastic. The plastic mills like wood,



so sashes can be made to fit almost any size opening. The company recently made 30 by 80-in. windows for a fairgrounds and has made custom sashes for churches and others.

"Being able to mill or work the plastic was important as I mismeasured my windows. The replacements were perhaps 1/8 in. or less too large. With the help of an electric sander, I took them down to size quickly.

"The sashes are designed for easy glass replacement should a pane break. Screws in the top and bottom of the window let you take part of the sash off nearest the problem pane. Remove the screws; remove the glass and old silicone. Slide in the new glass, replace the screws and run a bead of silicone around the edge of the pane.

"Windows are available in different styles and sizes. Two panes tall by 2 wide start at \$42.11. I went with 2 tall by 3 wide, which cost more, but it was worth it to me."

Paul Peyton, Ava, Mo.: "My **McDonald** deep well pump (made by Franklin Electric) is rated at one hp, but its 2,100-watt power consumption is almost equal to a 3 hp rating.

"Low costs means minimal operator comforts. Backing up with the 3-wheel design can be a problem as you steer with your feet, using independent hand clutches for the front drive wheels.

"Problems we identified with the design included a fast 3rd speed forward, awkward throttle control requiring the operator to lean forward alongside the engine, and an emergency shut down that is bad for the engine. A minor problem is the exhaust being close to the operator's knee, requiring an extension.

"The **LIFAN** engine on it is superb. It has an electric start, but started on the first pull after winter storage.

"With its \$5,000 price (now up to \$7,500), operating costs, depreciation and taxes, we estimate a cost per acre for harvesting of about \$27. That's based on the estimated life of 20 years and approximately 12 days per year combining small grains and 4 days as a stationary thresher of corn and beans.

"While not totally satisfied with our initial use, we remain optimistic. The alternative is going back to scythes or sickles."

We have a solar power system, so the actual power consumption is very important. The start-up surge is greater than our system can tolerate so when the pump starts, any other items that may be running are temporarily shut down. This shutdown is harmful to appliances and is especially troublesome if we're using a computer when the pump starts. If the pump consumed its true rated power of 750 watts, the system would handle the startup just fine.

Monte Jestes, Stillwater, Okla.: A **Deere** 4600 4-WD loader tractor rates as Monte's "worst buy". "The body panels are made of plastic that's now breaking. The hydraulics run extremely hot, and as a result the loader can't hold a load for more than 15 min."

Lyle A. Oakes, Montrose, Penn.: "It's the best mower I've ever owned," says Lyle about his 2013 **Country Clipper** 60-in. zero turn model. "It steers with a single joystick, rides nice, and has plenty of power to mow my 5 1/2-acre lawn."

Stan Bury, Oregon, Ohio: Stan installed an electronic ignition kit from **Denny's Carb Shop** in his **Deere** 3010 gas tractor (ph 937 368-2304; www.dennyscarbshop.com). "I bought this kit because I had starting and plug fouling problems with the tractor. This kit worked great. I'd recommend it to anyone.

"My **Mustang** 940 skid loader is an excellent machine (ph 262 334-9461; www.mustangmfg.com).

Richard Edington, Norwalk, Ohio: "The 1994 **GM** 1500 pickup I use in my lawn care business works great. All I've replaced are the tires and a brake line. The V-6 engine is fuel efficient and can pull a 17-ft. loaded trailer with no problem."

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