

How To Tan A Deer Hide Fast

Gregory Korner, Sr., Brookville, Ind., came up with a way to tan deer hides fast, by using an inexpensive Harbor Freight concrete mixer and a 1,000 psi pressure washer. The mixer de-hairs the hide and the pressure washer removes the fat and meat.

"I seldom operate the mixer longer than 24 hrs. for any of the processes I use to tan hides," says Korner. "I came up with this system because I wanted something that would work fast. I have access to a large number of deer hides from my brother's custom slaughter house, but in researching the internet I found that most people still tan hides the old way. To de-hair the hide they put it in a garbage can filled with a lye solution and then stir occasionally with a stick. The process takes 2 days to 3 weeks. I use a concrete mixer because it provides constant agitation and works much faster."

Korner bought the 3 1/2 cu. ft. concrete mixer powered by a 1/3 hp electric motor at Harbor Freight for \$200. He uses big hose clamps to fasten 1/16-in. thick rubber roofing material over the lip of the mixer's 18-in. dia. opening, forming a seal that keeps the corrosive lye from splashing out. Once all the hair has been removed from the hide, he uses a salt solution in the mixer to flush all the lye out of the hide.

"It's important to make sure the lye

is completely washed out," says Korner. "When you're done the water in the mixer should be perfectly clear. It might take several washings. If you don't get all the lye out it will eventually break the hide down and ruin it."

Then he cleans the hide using water under pressure, which he says is the most amazing part of the process.

"The old way to clean the hide requires stretching the hide over a board or sawhorse and then hours of scraping work to remove all the fat, meat and membranes. It's a messy job. By using a pressure washer there's no mess, and I can completely clean the hide in only about 40 min."

He lays the hide on a concrete floor and then uses a fan-shaped nozzle with the pressure washer to clean it. "The nozzle works like a knife blade, but since the hide is much tougher than the fat and meat and since the nozzle is fan-shaped, it won't blow a hole through the hide," says Korner. "Instead, it just 'peels' the unwanted material right off and results in a perfectly clean hide."

He then puts the hide in the mixer again and adds a mixture of water and alum (www.nuts.com).

The last step is to add a small amount of Neats foot oil and about 5 gal. of golf balls in order to help soften the hide as it tumbles.



Gregory Korner uses an inexpensive Harbor Freight concrete mixer and a 1,000 psi pressure washer to tan deer hides. He used three 8-ft. metal strips to build a drying frame.



"How long I operate the mixer depends on how soft I want the leather – the longer it tumbles, the softer it will come out," says Korner.

One time he even added walnut hulls into the mixer when softening the hide. "I was refurbishing an early 1900's doctor's carriage and wanted to replace the worn-out black leather seats. I wanted the hides as black as possible, so I added walnut hulls and ran the mixer for about 24 hrs. It worked great," says Korner.

He used three 8-ft. metal furring strips to

build a drying frame for the tanned hide. The hide is secured to the frame with waterproof poly cords that loop through holes punched in near the hide's edges.

He says his tanning process can also be used on other kinds of hides. "If you just want to remove the fat and meat from the hide but not the hair, you won't need the lye," he notes.

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Dried Salad Flakes Packed With Nutrients

Just a pinch will do, says Rick Machado, a California vegetable and organic seed grower who has figured how to get kids to eat more vegetables. For more than two decades he has been making Salad Flakes by dehydrating various salad greens.

Extremely high in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, Salad Flakes have one appealing characteristic to fussy eaters – there is no taste. A pinch of dried greens is equal to eating a handful of fresh greens, so it appeals to health-minded adults as well.

Machado was inspired to build a dehydrator after a customer bought fresh greens for a month-long camping trip. The customer said he planned to dehydrate them, an idea that intrigued Machado who always has more greens growing than he can sell fresh.

Since there weren't any dehydrators on the market large enough to handle large quantities, Machado researched and built his own, with advice from a friend in the geothermal business.

The closet-size unit has perforated tray shelves, a fan, and a heater set at 105 F.

"It has to go from wet to dry evenly so it doesn't mold in between. The door seals like a refrigerator so the fan pulls the air out evenly at 25 psi," Machado explains.

From the 15 lbs. of green salad that he puts in the dehydrator for 3 days (using less than 50 cents of electricity), he gets 1.2 lbs. of dried material. He removes the fibrous stems (ribs of kale, for example) and crumbles up the rest before storing it in tightly sealed containers, then vacuum sealing it to sell.

Machado makes the flakes year round (60 lbs. annually) and sells them for \$16/oz. (\$42 for 3 oz. bag), which is equivalent to the \$16/lb. cost he charges for fresh greens.

He uses a mixture of excess greens growing in his fields: kale, broccoli leaves, spinach, cabbage, amaranth, quinoa, chard,



Loaded with nutrients, Salad Flakes are made by dehydrating various salad greens.

wild chicories, mustards, wheat and oat grasses to name a few. In season, he might also throw in lambs quarter and dandelions. All ingredients are listed on the salad flake package.

Machado figured he had a good thing going with the flakes as he ate them himself and sprinkled them on the food he prepared for his wife and children – who grew up very healthy. In 1999, official nutrient testing of the flakes verified they contained 490 ORAC units per gram, short for Oxidative Radical Absorbance Capacity, the ability of a particular food to clean up free radicals in the body, much like an antioxidant. Machado suggests sprinkling a pinch of the flakes on food – up to 6 pinches a day.

He encourages others to dry their own greens as well and will offer advice on how to build a large dehydrator like the one he built.

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"Truck Farming" Company Offers Unique Line Of Equipment

CropCare Equipment has an extensive line of equipment for fruit and vegetable growers including sprayers, a picking cart, and a plastic mulch lifter for retrieving plastic mulch.

Sprayers run the gamut with pull-type, 3-pt. hitch and skid sprayers for use with all size tractors, ATV's and utility vehicles. Sizes include 15-gal. garden tractor pull types, 25-gal. ATV mounts, 60-gal. pull types and skids for ATV's and UTV's, and 1,000-gal. trailing sprayers. A wide array of 3-pt. hitch sprayers offers tanks from 40 to 400 gal. Most booms are available with either manual or hydraulic fold.

High-pressure sprayers and shielded boom sprayers are also available. CropCare configures high-pressure sprayers in a variety of sizes from 55-gal., 3-pt. units to 750-gal. trailing sprayers. The innovative 25-ft., single-sided booms are adjustable from 24 to 84-in. heights. Booms are fully hydraulic with hydraulic fold and leveling in addition to height adjustments.

Shielded boom sprayers can be 3-pt. mounted with 55-gal. or 110-gal. tanks. The shielded booms are height and width adjustable. They have clear shields of Lexan plastic for maximum drift protection between the rows or over the rows. The sprayers can be equipped with multiple pump options.

The picking cart is a battery-powered 3-wheeler that leaves hands free for planting, maintenance or harvest. It offers up to 6 hrs. of continuous run time. Dual, high-torque gear motors operate at either 22 ft./min. or 44 ft./min for low density or high-density work. The cart can be adjusted from 20 to 30-in. heights with a width of 36 to 66 in.

The rear produce tray holds up to 5 strawberry flats, while the front picking tray tilts to the operator, adjusts in height and rotates in 45-degree increments. The cart can be towed to the site by a single ATV, tractor, truck or by hand.

The plastic mulch lifter has a center coulter



CropCare offers an extensive line of equipment for fruit and vegetable growers including sprayers (top), a plastic mulch lifter for retrieving plastic (middle), and a picking cart.

that splits plastic in two. Shovels help lift the edges of the plastic. The dual reels lift plastic, dumping dirt, vines and trash back into the field. Plastic is neatly rolled for recycling or disposal. The rear mount operator platform offers full visibility of the operation with thumb control of tension on the plastic being rolled. Collapsible reels allow quick and easy removal of plastic rolls. Double coulters are available for use with multiple row beds.

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