

Reader Letters



Here's a simple handrail for a 2 by 4 stairway railing. It fits over another 2 by 4 set on edge. Just cut a dado that's sized to fit over the side of the 2 by 4 and then bevel the top edges. Gives a finished look to the railing and a better grip. **(Dillon Phillips, Indianola, Iowa)**

When tying poly baling twine together, tie a square knot and snug it up. Then heat it with a match or lighter so it melts a bit, and pull it tight. It will never come loose. **(Cornelius Reynolds, Eagle Point, Oregon)**

We really enjoyed the Editor's Notebook article in the last issue on SaveOurMonarchs.org. The response has been amazing, with people from all over the U.S. requesting Milkweed Seed packets. Many others have made donations. We have already sent out more than 600,000 packets of seed. Milkweed is necessary for the survival of monarchs, which have been in decline for many years. We have a "Save Our Monarchs" Facebook page with a lot of good stories from people who have planted seed. **(Ward Johnson, Save Our Monarchs Foundation, P.O. Box 390135, Minneapolis, Minn. 55439 ph 952 829-0600; www.saveourmonarchs.org)**



Big bales can be used as "plugs" to stop flash flooding from fields into road ditches. A nearby farmer, Dave Obrecht, set a corn stalk bale on end and holds it in place with posts. Works great. **(Rex Gogerty, Hubbard, Iowa)**

I've had good luck baiting rat traps with Dial soap. Apparently they can't resist the smell. It really works great. **(Alfred Geiger, Jacksonville, Fla.)**

We used to raise rabbits but we hated to see them caged up. So we decided to fence in a 2-acre field. The problem is that they will tunnel under or slip through most fences. So I used my tractor to dig a 1-ft. deep trench around the entire area and then drove posts into the bottom of the trench. I used

a combination of chain link fence and chicken wire, which keeps small bunnies from escaping through the fence. Then we filled in the trench. This worked great and we never had to mow that field again. **(Howard Leach, Newport, Ark.)**



I made a "ripper" out of a box blade. It's about 5 ft. wide, just the width of the tractor. I left the braces on top and back for strength. It fits on my 23 hp. Kubota tractor's 3-pt. hitch. Lets me plow my garden in about a third of the time that it used to take me with a 2-bottom plow. The teeth are adjustable for depth. **(Bernard Marvel, RR 1, Box 44, Browning, Ill. 62624)**

About 15 years ago I read a magazine article that recommended putting strong roll bars on older tractors. I heeded the advice and retrofitted my two VAC Cases,



International 300 and big Leyland British tractor. Local welding shops refused the job because of liability so I hired a welder who used 1-in. thick stainless steel plates that bolt to the rear axle. The plates weld to 2 by 4 double-wall tubes. The steel top is framed with 2-in. sq. steel tubing.

Soon after making these modifications, they saved my life while I was moving an 800-lb. round bale on a hillside with my Leyland. I rolled the tractor upside down and would have died instantly if not for the rollbar. Instead, all that happened was I hit my head on soft grass and transmission fluid leaked over me. **(Edwin C. Runner, Kingwood, West Virginia)**



I enjoyed reading about the "foolproof" live catch mousetrap in your last issue (Vol. 39, No. 4). I made a similar trap with a large metal popcorn container, the kind often sold in stores around Christmas time. I used a hole saw to cut a hole in the center of the lid, then put bait (bird seed works well) inside the can. On numerous occasions I've found 2 or 3



I built a mini firetruck for a local parade. It started life as a Craftsman 16 hp. mower. I replaced the blown Briggs & Stratton motor with a 621cc Kohler, and then added some hot rod parts – a blower hood scoop that works off the throttle, Harley Davidson short mufflers, and a deadman switch on a tether cord. I mounted an old fire department siren on it and "wig wag" LED lights. Friends made the hose beds and ladders. It

sounds awesome and goes very fast because I used pulley ratios that give me up to 40 mph. I made a tandem axle that's supported by independent suspension. That way the drive wheels are always in contact with the ground. The 10 by 20 8-in. wheels were finished off with chrome mags. It's loud, fast and red! **(Ed Brouwer, Osoyoos, British Columbia)**

mice at a time inside the can. Since the sides of the can are metal, mice can't climb back out. They can then be easily disposed of by removing the lid. It's simple and quick to make, and easy to use. **(Lance Hoffman; lanceh@futuretk.com)**



Our daughter showed ponies for many years and even won a national award

back in 1976. I saved all the horseshoes she went through over the years and welded them together to build this chair.

I used a bandsaw to cut some of the horseshoes up. When it was finished I painted the chair black. I've also built several other horseshoe chairs for other people in our area. **(Dallas Denison, 12138 Faribault Blvd., Dundas, Minn. 55019 ph 507 645-9873; mddenison@**

Without a front window in our house we never knew if the mail had arrived, so my father came up with a unique idea. He attached a spring-loaded toggle switch outside the mailbox and fastened a small metal lip alongside the mailbox lid to hold the switch down. A wire runs from the switch to a small red light fastened to an electrical outlet inside our house.

When the mailbox lid is opened, the switch flips and turns the light off to indicate the mail has arrived. After I pick up the mail I push the switch down and shut the lid. **(Cheryl Guffey, 4660 N. Jennifer St., Boise, Idaho 83704)**



I saw this trailer at an auction and immediately thought of FARM SHOW. It was home-built in Scotland from various odds and ends. What caught my eye was the drawbar. It's made from the "dipper" end of an old backhoe – the section of



the backhoe arm that holds the bucket. Makes a very heavy tongue that will never bend. Photo of backhoe shows where tongue came from. **(Andrew Sewell, England; classiccombines@aol.co.uk)**

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