

ther falls down or breaks. We finally solved the problem by turning it around. Also, the tongue is far too long and should be shorter.”

**Bruce Graham, Tyler, Texas:** “My 1957 Gravelly walk-behind tractor has lasting value and is one of my best buys of all time. I bought it from my father in 1977 after using it as a teenager in the late 1950’s to mow our 1 1/3-acre yard.

“When I bought the tractor, it was equipped with a 50-in. mower which I used for a number of years. The tractor had been refurbished with updated features such as electric start, a hood with lights, a remote accessory engagement lever, a riding sulky, and a paper cartridge air filter.

“I overhauled the tractor in 1988 and made quite a few modifications. I installed an oil bath air cleaner off a Volkswagen car, increased the overall drive gear ratio, reversed the carburetor mounting, added an oil pressure gauge on the left handlebar, and mounted Troybilt switches in the end of each handlebar. One was a starter switch and the other was a kill switch for the magneto.

“The tractor still has its original Gravelly engine equipped with a cross-flow head. Later on I added a Dodge 383 exhaust valve equipped with a free-valve rotator mechanism of my own design. It also has an alcohol water infusion system. The magneto was recently rebuilt and is now running in top form. This tractor also is equipped with an optional dual wheel traction kit and a steering sulky that makes it very maneuverable. In 1988 I traded the mower deck in for a smaller 40-in. model. Over the years I’ve accumulated a number of attachments that are all of the original Gravelly design. This tractor uses no oil and I expect it to last through my generation.”

**Ellis R. Hill, Zanesville, Ohio:** “Our H & S hay tedder is our worst buy. We have to

### “This tractor uses no oil, and I expect it to last through my generation.”

replace all the teeth at least once or twice a season. Our neighbor has owned a Krone tedder for two years and says he hasn’t had to replace a single tooth. He owned an H & S model before he bought the Krone.”

**Wayne Todd, Denton, Montana:** “My Bosch 24-volt saw and my Bosch 24-volt drill both work well. They have a lot of power and a long battery life per charge. Also, both tools are user friendly.

“My HTP 160 wire feed welder works erratically and is my worst buy. It’s hard to adjust the wire speed, and the amperage always seems to fluctuate. It also runs into the duty cycle limit sooner than it should. The company was helpful at first, but all their repairs and advice didn’t help much. I wish I had bought a Miller welder instead - it would have been well worth the extra cost.”

**Valentina Deressi, Iron Mountain, Mich.:** “It’s an excellent machine. I cut a lot of acres every year with it,” says Valentina, pleased owner of a Deere 260 lawn mower. “In 12 years all I’ve had to do is change the oil and filters and one set of blades.”

**William C. Harris, Frederick, Md.:** A Kubota B-20 tractor equipped with a front-end loader and backhoe rates as William’s “best buy”. “I bought it used with only 285 hours on it. It’s a small industrial heavy duty model with a lot of power, but it’s small enough to get between trees, go up hills, and fix ponds on our 35 acres.”

On the “worst buy” side, he lists his Polson chain saw equipped with a 20-in. bar. “It’s equipped with an automatic choke but it still

starts hard.”

**Gary Abernethy, Hickory, N.C.:** A Howse post hole digger rates as Gary’s “worst buy”. “The gearbox went out twice even though I had used the machine to dig only about 100 holes. The universal joint also went out. The only place I could buy a new U-joint was at a company dealer 50 miles away. But the company repaired both gearboxes. My only cost was to ship the broken gearbox back.”

**Douglas Wenger, Lebanon, Penn.:** “My Deere 946 discbine is my best buy. It cuts close even in down hay. I flipped the knives over for the first time after cutting 500 acres. It takes only about 10 minutes to change the knives and costs \$22. The cost to operate this machine is quite low.

“My Generac 3500 psi pressure washer is my worst buy. At 20 hours the pump - made by Caterpillar - blew up. Caterpillar wouldn’t warranty the pump because they said it had run out of oil. Yet I know the pump was full of oil when I started it that morning. A pair of local mechanics looked at the pieces and they both said the journals weren’t scarred and that the problem was a faulty connecting rod. Caterpillar wanted \$1,200 for a new pump, yet I only paid \$1,100 for the entire washer, which is equipped with a Honda engine. I ended up installing an AR pump for \$500.”

**Carlton W. Sturgeon, Isle Lamotte, Vt.:** Carlton says his 2001 Chevrolet 2500 heavy duty pickup equipped with an 8100 engine and a 5-speed Allison automatic transmission works great and is his “best buy”. “The engine-transmission combination on this pickup is the best I’ve ever seen. I use the pickup to haul my 21-ft. gooseneck trailer loaded with two tractors, and it has power to spare.

“My Ford F-150 pickup was one of my worst buys ever. When I left the dealer’s lot, I only got one mile down the road before the service light came on. Later, rain water poured in on the passenger side of the floor. The first winter the pickup wouldn’t start at temperatures of 20 to 25 degrees above zero. The dealer checked it out but couldn’t find any problems. When the pickup had 40,000 miles on it I traded it in for a Chevrolet with 98,000 miles, paying \$500 to boot. It was the best move I ever made.”

**Ruth Ann Marley, Nokomis, Ill.:** Ruth Ann likes her new Figsars pruning shears (Figsars, 780 Carolina St., Sauk City, Wis. 53583 ph 800 500-4849). She says it lets her



cut thicker branches while also reducing hand fatigue. The secret is in a new type of lever action. The company produces a wide variety of high quality garden tools.

**Eldon Harvey, Ft. Pierre, S. Dak.:** “I’m well pleased with my 1989 Buick LeSabre which I bought used five years ago. It has more than 320,000 miles on it and the only expense I’ve had is for new tires and a steering rod. The fuel-injected engine starts right up even at temperatures down to 35 degrees below zero. I’ve never had to add oil to the engine.

“My International Harvester 544 tractor has a carburetor with an electric shut-off. It used too much gas and finally ruined the engine. I had to spend more than \$2,000 to have the engine overhauled, and after that the en-

## He Says “Tunnel Farming” Produces Better Quality Crops

According to a report in a recent issue of the Ontario Farmer, John Cooper of Simcoe, Ontario, is happy with his Haygrove Tunnels which he uses to grow raspberries. He likes the system so well he became the Canadian distributor for the England-based manufacturer.

“High tunnel farming” extends the growing season for fresh market vegetable crops. Unlike greenhouses, they’re not heated. But, they’re big enough to drive tractors and implements inside and are intended to be permanent structures in the field. The Haygrove tunnels have metal frames covered by plastic that can be rolled up on the sides. The units come in widths from 18 to 28 ft. and can be built to any length. Galvanized steel “Y” posts on each side allow you to connect as many bays together as you want. The ends of the tunnels can be opened and side curtains can be raised to allow for air movement. The open ends permit the easy access of tractors and equipment.

After 12 years of growing raspberries under conventional conditions, Cooper installed tunnels to cover about one acre of his 2002 crop. He has since added several more tunnels and last year grew 2 1/2 acres of raspberries under 11 tunnels. The tunnels he uses are 24 ft. wide by 400 ft. long, and 11 ft. high at the middle. Drip irrigation is used to supply water and fertilizer to the plants in the tunnels.

Cooper expected to harvest about 8,000 lbs. of raspberries per acre. In a side-by-side comparison of late season raspberries outside and inside the tunnels, he told FARM SHOW the canes grown under the tunnels produced almost twice as much fruit.

“From a production standpoint, growing raspberries under hoops is definitely the way to go,” says Cooper. “The vinyl tunnel protects the crop from rain and overnight dew,

gine worked for only two or three months. I couldn’t use the tractor all last summer because the company apparently doesn’t make the short needle valve any more. I’ll probably have to get a carburetor that takes the long needle valve.”

**Brad Smith, Mayport, Penn.:** Brad nominates his 1956 Deere Model 420T tractor as his “best buy”. “I rescued this tractor from its previous owner. He was using it as a parts tractor so he could rebuild another one. I built



a 3-pt. hitch platform for it to haul firewood, tools, dirt, bales, ear corn and my grand children. I also take this tractor to antique tractor pulls and shows.”

On the minus side, “My Black & Decker cordless cut saw has limited power and a very short battery charge. I wouldn’t buy another saw from this company.”

**Donald Holland, Savannah, Mo.:** “It starts and runs well, is easy to service, and has a comfortable ride,” reports Donald, pleased with his 2002 Chevrolet 2500 pickup. “I had a 1989 model that I sold before purchasing this one. It had more than 200,000 miles on it. I used nothing but ethanol in it. I also use nothing but ethanol in my



**Tunnels have metal frames covered by plastic that can be rolled up on the sides.**

so the quality of the berries is far superior to those grown outdoors. What we’re not getting is an increase in the price of raspberries, so if you grow raspberries under tunnels they will have to pay for themselves strictly in increased yields. I’ve only used this system for two years so I can’t say for sure yet whether it will pay for itself. The tunnel system of growing high value crops such as strawberries, raspberries and fresh-cut flowers has been used in England and Europe since 1995 and has seen a big increase in acreage every year. However, those countries have a Mediterranean climate there and get a lot more rain. We have a continental climate, so we don’t know yet how using tunnel farming to grow high value crops will work out. For example, it may get too hot under tunnels for some crops to grow well. The jury is still out.”

Cooper says next year he plans to also grow strawberries under tunnels.

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2002 model. It gets about 17 mpg and has had no problems. I like the location of the instruments.”

**David Simpson, Elmore City, Okla.:** A 1989 Stihl 064 chain saw rates as his “best buy”. “Factory specs had the saw running at 12,500 rpm’s. I had the dealer re-tune it to 11,000 rpm’s. I run the oil/gas ratio about 45:1 instead of the factory 50:1 and use a 20-in. bar on it. There’s no telling how many cords of wood this saw has cut. I’d recommend it to anyone.”

**Courtney W. Miller, Headrick, Okla.:** “My Agco-Allis 9635 tractor starts easy and pulls good and doesn’t use any oil. It has more than 4,400 hours on it with only minor problems.”

**Susan N. Kustos, New Milford, Ct.:** A 1996 Mercedes Benz E-300 car equipped with a diesel engine rates as Susan’s “worst buy”. “I bought it used three years ago. The car went into ‘lock-out mode’ and wouldn’t start. It was in the shop for five weeks. It went into lock-out mode again and was in the shop for six more weeks. When I went to pick up the car at the shop it wouldn’t start, and no one in our area could get the car to start. I finally got rid of it.”

**Robert M. Hancock, Terre Haute, Ind.:** Robert likes his Drill Doctor drill bit sharpener (Dakota Sales, 7560 153<sup>rd</sup> Ave. S.E., Wyndmere, N. Dak. 58081 ph 800 260-9944). “It can be used to sharpen bits from 3/32 to 3/4-in. diameter and can be used on conventional, split-point, and masonry drill bits. It works on carbide, cobalt and high speed steel.”