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He bolted 12 Rayco stump grinder teeth onto a 48-tooth, no. 60 chain sprocket that's belt-driven off mower engine.

He Built His Own Self-Propelled Stump Grinder

"I wanted to rent a stump grinder last summer but couldn't find one that I liked. So I decided to build my own self-propelled rig out of an old Cub Cadet riding mower and the handlebars off a walk-behind rototiller," says Kenny Ranta, Excelsior Springs, Mo.

His stump grinder has no expensive hydraulics and instead relies on the mower's gas engine and a pair of identical electric starter motors off old riding mowers. One motor is used to start the engine and the other to power the mower's transaxle, which drives the machine. Both starter motors operate off the mower's battery.

He started with an old Cub Cadet mower equipped with an 18 hp. electric-start horizontal shaft gas engine and 5-speed transmission. He stripped the machine down to just the engine, battery, transaxle and wheels. He used steel tubing to build a

rectangular frame and mounted the engine and transaxle on back of it.

He cut off all but the center portion of a small pulley at the middle of the transaxle and welded the drive gear off a Briggs & Stratton starter motor onto it. He fastened the starter motor itself upside down next to the drive gear, and it drives the transaxle. "The starter motor stays engaged to the transaxle at all times," says Ranta. "If I want I can drive the machine around without even running the engine."

He remounted the engine's original starter motor horizontally a few inches behind the other starter motor and hooked it up to a solenoid valve that replaces the engine flywheel.

He welded a pair of handlebars off a rototiller on back of the frame, keeping the rototiller's throttle choke and ignition switch.

A push button is used to engage the motor that drives the transaxle. A T-shaped chrome lever serves as a parking brake by locking the transaxle up.

He bought 12 Rayco stump grinder teeth from Bailey's (www.baileysonline.com) and bolted them onto a 48-tooth, No. 60 chain sprocket. The sprocket mounts on pillow block bearings that ride on a 1 1/2-in. dia. driveshaft attached to the front part of the frame.

"I mounted a small pulley on the engine and a larger one on the driveshaft to make the sprocket run slower," says Ranta. "A spring-loaded idler pulley is used to engage a pair of belts that drive the sprocket. The idler pulley is controlled by a long metal rod with a golf ball fixed to one end that leads back to the handlebars."

The sprocket is covered by a metal shield

that deflects wood chips to the side instead of back toward the engine and battery.

"It works even better than I thought it would," says Ranta. "I got the engine free from a friend and spent less than \$500 to build it. I built it because I wanted to help a friend remove several big stumps in her back yard. A local contractor wanted \$400 to grind them down.

"I had to install the starter that drives the transaxle upside down because it wouldn't fit any other way. A starter motor won't run long before it heats up so I can't drive the machine around for very long, but that isn't a problem."

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He Finds Uses For Trampoline Frames

Much to his wife's dismay, Mike Bube has been known to bring more items back from the landfill than he takes there. While he tries to practice restraint, the one item he never passes up is a free trampoline frame.

"The frames are so versatile. Everything is a slip joint, so you don't need to screw it together. You can keep them outside because they are built for outside. The tubing is heavy-duty galvanized, so it is strong," Bube explains. He points out that usually there is nothing wrong with the frame, but people get rid of trampolines when the mesh and netting deteriorates.

Some of Bube's best creations with the frames hold livestock. His mobile chicken pen came from a 13-ft. dia. trampoline frame that he extended with pvc pipe and zip ties to create a dome with bird netting over the top to keep out chicken hawks. Because it is lightweight, the pen can be moved to new grass as often as needed.

Bube used the same technique to keep rabbits in a pen with the addition of fencing and chicken netting wrapped around the base. And, when his daughter wanted to raise a 4-H calf, Bube made a pen for it. It worked well during the summer for her to work with the calf and move around the yard for fresh pasture.

Bube also likes to use trampolines in other ways.

"I broke one down and reassembled the slip joint pieces to use for sawhorses," he says. He tops them with plywood for a work bench that's at a comfortable 36-in. working height. He's also placed two 16-ft. sections of an extension ladder over the trampoline sawhorses to hold a couple of pieces of plywood to make a long table for family gatherings or craft projects. It can also work as scaffolding.

When not in use, Bube breaks the sawhorses



Mike Bube used an old trampoline frame to build this mobile chicken pen, adding bird netting over the top to keep out hawks.



He reassembled the slip joint pieces on one trampoline to use as sawhorses, topping them with plywood.



Long sections of plywood are placed over trampoline sawhorses to make a 16-ft. table.

down and stacks them in a bucket.

With spring coming, the Nashville, Ind., recycler says he was looking for another trampoline frame to create a greenhouse. He "shops" for them by checking out free items people pile out by the curb and by checking out the free listings on Craigslist.com.

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Redneck Mouse Trap

"I've had great success with this simple redneck mouse trap which I use in my shop and anywhere mice are a problem," says Loren Lindsay, N. Mankato, Minn. "It makes use of a one-liter plastic bottle with a screw-on cap that fits inside the top of a 5-gal. bucket.

"I make a ramp to the top of the bucket, securing the ramp to the lip of the bucket with nails. Then I drill a hole in the bottle cap and also through the bottom of the bottle. I thread a stiff wire through the bottle and also through a hole in the top of the bucket on both sides. The bottle will rotate on the wire.

"I place a gob of peanut butter on the middle of the bottle. I also pour a few inches of water or antifreeze into the bucket. Mice climb up the ramp and jump down onto the bottle, thinking it's a solid floor they can stand on to get the bait. Of course, the bottle rotates and the mouse drops into the water and drowns.

"Works great and cost nothing to make. I sometimes find as many as 6 dead mice during a week's time."



Mice climb up ramp and jump down onto plastic bottle, which then rotates causing mouse to drop into water and drown.

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