



When Emerald Ash Borers devastated Jim Dillon's ash trees, he sawed the trees into lumber and built this barn. It replicates the one his grandfather built in the late 1800's.

Barn Built From Diseased Trees

The new barn at Dillon Fruit Farm in Lisbon, Ohio, took more than 150 trees, 250 hrs. of bandsaw cutting, and months of weekend work to build. But owner Jim Dillon is more than satisfied with the results.

First of all, it was a way to use his farm's ash trees devastated by Emerald Ash Borers that girdled and killed the trees.

"We look at our woods as a lumber yard," explains Dillon, noting he cut trees for beams, floors and cabinets in his home prior to building the barn.

There was nothing wrong with the wood of the ash trees so Dillon cut them down and sawed 30,200 board feet including 12x12 beams and 6x6 braces and 6x8 floor joists for a 32 by 72-ft. barn with a 12 by 72-ft. lean-to. He cut 4,231 board ft. of hemlock and white pine boards for siding and lumber. The barn was built with green wood and after it dried and shrank, Dillon added batten boards to cover the gaps.

It was built to replicate the hand-hewn barn Dillon's grandfather built near Buffalo, N.Y. "Grandpa's barn was built in the late 1800's. It's still solid and sits on a hilltop that gets lots of wind," Dillon says.

He took photos of it and checked out barns in Ohio to figure out how to make the tenon and mortise joints, and he also made the 230 oak pins to hold them together. He discovered

that ash wood was harder than oak wood when doing finishing chisel work.

With the help of family and friends, he started building the barn in February 2018. It was framed by mid-June in time for the wedding of a former worker at the fruit farm. The loft floor was in but the roof wasn't finished until November.

"It was like an open pavilion with lights and decorations," Dillon says.

Currently the barn stores equipment and lumber, but in the future, part of it will be used as a picnic area for customers at the farm's U-pick fruit operation (blueberries, red and black raspberries, and elderberries).

After hiring a crew to put on the metal roof and including the cost of the sawmill, the barn cost about \$20,000 to build.

The project gave Dillon new respect for previous barn builders who hand-hewed all the beams.

"We had the help of modern battery tools and a tractor with a forklift to put the beams in place. I just can't imagine how they did everything by hand," he concludes.

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Darrel and Shayne Sperry created this shop office that replicates an old-time John Deere dealership. It's incorporated into their Montana farm shop.

Shop Office Replicates 1920's Storefront

The entryway to the farm shop office of Darrel Sperry and his son, Shayne, replicates a 1920's John Deere dealership.

Shayne got the idea from a magazine photo, and the Sperrys incorporated it into their 70 by 90-ft. Corvallis, Mont., farm shop.

"We're big John Deere fans," Darrel says. Besides using the shop to maintain tractors and equipment used on their 800-acre farm, they restore John Deere tractors. About 30 of them are parked in a space in back of the shop.

The storefront has wood painted in authentic John Deere colors, and cornices holding a decorative shelf across the front that the Sperrys made in their woodshop. Custom-made doors out of alder wood create a 10-ft. opening like the John Deere store doors were built, so that equipment or tractors could be taken inside for display.

The original storefronts also had yellow

and green stained glass above and below the windows. Sperry said they painted pieces of plywood to replicate the glass.

Instead of John Deere parts behind their storefront, the Sperrys have a full kitchen and office space. It works out well when it's their turn to host meetings and potlucks for their local antique tractor club.

The second story space above the false front is filled with antique toys and pedal tractors.

"I have an old gas pump to restore to put in front of the storefront," Sperry says.

It will add the perfect touch, and when it's done, a local Deere dealership wants to take a photo of the gas pump and storefront for its calendar.

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Old-Fashioned Coffee Grinder Has Modern Features



Justin and Britta Burrus love coffee made from fresh ground beans, so they built this old-fashioned grinder and started selling it along with other items.

Coffee lovers appreciate the beauty, quality and functionality of the coffee grinder made by a rural Missouri couple, Justin Burrus, who works in construction, and his wife Britta, a graphic design artist. They share a love for good coffee made from fresh ground coffee beans. About 10 years ago, when they couldn't find a handle that met their expectations, they decided to make their own,

patterning it after antique grinders.

"We make them the way they used to, so that it will last. It has a ceramic burr that allows you to adjust the grind from coarse to super fine for every brew method from Turkish to French Press to Espresso," says Justin.

The couple's business, Red Rooster Trading Company, mainly sells their hand-built goods online. Their product line has expanded into other coffee-related products, as well as peppermills, cutting boards, and furniture Justin builds from reclaimed barn wood.

Check out the website for the coffee mill and other products and to contact them for more information. Wholesale pricing is also available to retail shops.

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The Metzgers use this converted 72-passenger bus to provide meals for their work crew, moving the benches against the walls and placing tables in front of them.

"Supper Bus" Makes Field Meals Fun

By Dee George, Contributing Editor

Kyle Metzger grew up driving hay and silage trucks so she had no problem driving her family's "Supper Schoolbus" to fields and yards during last fall's harvest. The converted 2005 72-passenger bus was a big dining upgrade for the crew, and a lot more convenient for Metzger, who prepares the meals with her mother-in-law Joan.

"We used to haul tables and chairs in the back of the pickup," Metzger explains. "It was a lot of work setting them up and taking them down each time." Altogether, she serves meals about three months a year during planting and harvesting seasons for the Metzger families' 11,000 acres of canola, pulse and cereal crops. Spring and fall can be cold, hot, windy or buggy which can create unpleasant outdoor dining conditions in their Carbon, Alberta fields.

After seeing a bus used on another farm, the Metzgers learned that decommissioned buses were affordable. They spent \$1,600 for the bus and about \$2,200 to customize it.

One expense was an inverter that Metzger's husband, Marty, installed on the bus. It provides power for the refrigerator/freezer, coffee pot, lights and cell phone chargers when the bus is parked in a field. The rest of the time the bus is plugged in at the farm. Another expense was a custom-made John Deere green metal 8-ft. serving table with a lip to hold everything in place while on the road.

The Metzgers removed all the bus bench seats, then placed some of them along the bus walls and bolted them down. Metzger purchased 18-in. wide conference tables online to go with each bench. They are not bolted down so they can be moved as needed. Usually there are 10 to 12 people to

feed during harvest and 6 to 8 people during planting time.

Condiments, water and frozen treats are kept in the refrigerator behind the driver's seat, and the metal table makes it easy for everyone to serve themselves. A wash station is set up outside, and there's a handy magnetic paper towel holder on the ceiling.

Metzger packs totes with disposable dinnerware for surprise guests, as well as cleaning supplies and other items.

"Over the years we have perfected the art of our 'meals on wheels' - learning what bags, boxes, crates, thermoses and coolers work best," Metzger says.

Workers pack lunches for noon, so a good supper is important to keep them going into the night. Her menus include lots of meat, a starch, salad, vegetables and something sweet for dessert. Casseroles and fresh vegetables are popular.

To make it even better in 2021, she hopes to add a water cooler that uses big water bottles, instead of having to haul heavy pitchers of water from the house.

The bus makes everything easier for her and the crew, which includes three generations of the farm family and hired workers.

"It's just been so handy and such a fun change. It's more relaxed and comfortable so everyone is sticking around more, sharing stories and making plans for the rest of the day," Metzger says.

She adds that hopefully in the future the bus will come in handy for fun family adventures.

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