



Jamie Dougherty converted an old 18-ft. bin to a gazebo complete with cedar slab countertops.

Grain Bin Gazebo Great For Entertaining

Jamie Dougherty can entertain friends and family even in the rain. His grain bin gazebo provides shelter from sun or rain with its overhanging roof and bar/counter that wraps around the roof supports.

"My girlfriend saw one on the internet and showed it to me, so I started looking around for old grain bins," says Dougherty. "A friend of mine recently purchased a farm with several old bins he wasn't going to use and gave me one."

He retained the top ring and the roof from the 18-ft. bin, which he picked up with a telehandler. Once on a trailer, Dougherty and his son hauled it the 20 miles home.

"Moving the roof and top ring was the biggest challenge, followed by setting it in place," recalls Dougherty.

Dougherty had an ideal site for his new gazebo. A concrete pad with a wire corn crib on it also had several inches of gravel laid around it.

"I got rid of the crib and the pad, and the gravel provided a good base for a new and larger concrete pad," says Dougherty. "I made the diameter 5-ft. larger than the bin to accommodate seating inside or out and 10-in. thick for support posts."

The concrete was the biggest expense. He anchored eight 6 by 6-in. support posts to it and added 4 by 6-in. braces to each post. The braces were cut at an angle on a compound miter saw to fit the round roof. He also ripped them slightly to avoid hitting the top ring.

Dougherty anchored shorter 6 by 6-in. posts in between the support posts and connected them with 2 by 6-in. boards set on edge. These formed the base for the countertop made from live edge cedar slabs a friend had cut out years before but never used. Dougherty cut them 2 1/2-in. thick and 26-in. long. They were random 4 to 10-in. widths.

"I pieced them together as tight as I could while following the curve of the bin," says Dougherty. "I intended to use log cabin chinking in between. However, after it rained, I noted how well the counter drained and decided to leave it."

He also left the roof cap in place. He thought it would need to be open to accommodate smoke from a Breco Smokeless Fire Pit set in the center of the gazebo. Leaving it closed kept the gazebo warmer and he found the smoke drifted away under the edge of the roof.

Dougherty finished the gazebo in time to entertain guests this past fall. It was also in time to be tested by 70+ mph winds in December.

"It made it through the big wind without a problem," says Dougherty. "I tried to keep it low cost, but I tend to over-engineer everything. This time it paid off."

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The Benefits Of Building Beehouses

By Carolyn White

Five years ago, Colorado resident Patty Wyngaard had a brainstorm. "I'd started building birdhouses as a hobby but then realized that we need houses for our bees, too. They are so important to our future food supply."

In the old days, farmers attracted bees by drilling holes in fence posts or wooden boards. "They called them bee boards and they worked great, but we seem to have lost that in these modern times," she says.

Patty's new passion took off right away. Using scrap wood, nails she had on hand, and a drill, she started crafting small, natural-looking houses. She has sold or given away over a thousand of them through local farmer's markets. Interest has grown rapidly because, "These days, saving the bees has become a hot topic."

She prefers meeting with her customers

in person. "Most people I talk to have no idea there are over 4,000 species of bees in the United States and 25,000 worldwide. They don't realize that 100 Mason bees, for example, do the work of 1,000 honeybees, plus they're friendly. They don't have stingers."

While Mason bees use mud to pack their eggs in, other species known as "leafcutters" prefer leaves or flower petals. Using bit sizes from 1/4 to 3/8 in., Patty drills holes in each of her beehouses to accommodate the tiny occupants. The bees then secure three or four eggs inside each. Although Patty uses rough-cut and untreated wood for her houses "since toxins are deadly to these insects," she sands down the actual holes so when the bees hatch as adults, they won't hurt their wings.

Raw, untreated wood has another advantage: the natural material is just right to



Farm Toys Earn High Auction Bids

A recent article in *Kovels* antiques newsletter reports high winning bids at a recent farm toy auction and emphasized the importance of keeping collectibles in their original boxes (www.Kovels.com). The Girard Auction and Land Brokers of Wakonda, S.D., recently sold 433 items from a Farm Toy Hall of Fame member.

The top bid was \$10,400 for a rare starter set of five New Holland brand farm toys. An Ertl John Deere 1010 crawler tractor prototype auctioned for \$8,880, mostly due to its green color, because the real tractor was only made in Industrial Yellow.

A John Deere WA-14 tractor earned a \$4,400 bid. The owner had acquired the pristine condition and rare tractor from a farm toy expert who authored books and consulted for films about farming and toys, which added to the toy's value.

Ertl toys replicating other tractor models also brought good prices. A Ford 7710 tractor sold for \$242, and a miniature McCormick Farmall earned a \$963 bid.



A John Deere WA-14 tractor earned a \$4,400 bid.

Precision model toys known for intricate details and accurate scaling also sold well. A Precision Engineering John Deere 7B Plow toy with a brown box sold for \$1,540. A John Deere 7020 with rubber tires and the original box brought \$990.

Though die-cast toys bring the most money, some plastic toys have value too. For example, a plastic John Deere 730 yellow industrial tractor sold for \$94.



Once the eggs are laid in the holes, the houses can't be disturbed for at least 30 days. The growing bees need to rest.

help the eggs grow and hatch. "You can buy cute and decorative houses made of bamboo or plastic on the internet," Patty warns, "but those materials aren't native to a bee's needs."

After each hole is packed with bee eggs before winter hibernation, Patty carries them inside out of the weather. In the spring, she hangs each house on the south side of her shop to get full sun. "The houses have to go against something stationary and secure. They can't swing from tree branches," she explains. "Once the eggs are laid in the holes, the houses can't be disturbed for at least 30

days. The growing bees need to rest. They will hatch, fully grown, when it's time to pollinate, and generation after generation will return to the houses to lay even more eggs."

To ensure they have plenty of food after hatching, Patty recommends planting sunflowers or wildflowers nearby.

Patty currently has 15 egg-filled beehouses ready to hang outside for 2022. During the winter hibernation period, she carries some of the houses to different holiday and school events to generate interest and educate the curious.