

Labor-Saving Firewood Racks

"My homemade firewood racks eliminate 90 percent of the manual labor that's normally associated with burning wood," says Frank Redford of Fort Frances, Ontario.

He used old metal pipe to make the racks, which have a steel base and sit on a wooden pallet. Each rack measures about 3 ft. wide.

The process starts by placing three of the racks together side by side. Then Redford cuts uncut tree lengths into 9-ft. pieces and uses a tractor loader with forks to drop the 9-ft. lengths of wood into the racks. After each load is dumped into the racks he uses a chainsaw to cut the wood into firewood lengths. This procedure is repeated until the racks are full. The wood is then stored that way for a season.

When he wants to burn the wood, Redford uses his loader tractor to pick up the pallets

one at a time and then place them next to his outside wood burning furnace.

"Using this method, the only time I ever touch the wood is when I take it off the rack and drop it into the furnace," says Redford. "The racks keep the wood neatly piled. By putting a number of these racks together into a group, it's easy to keep them covered in order to protect from rain and snow.

"The loader I used is a 1961 Treefarmer skidder that I refurbished. I built a quick-tach style loader for it. However, you could use any type of loader that's equipped with pallet or bale forks and build the racks whatever size you want," he notes.

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Three racks are placed side by side. Redford drops 9-ft. logs into racks, then uses a chainsaw to cut the wood into firewood lengths.



Wheelbarrow is driven by a 5 hp engine. Caster wheels on back allow short turns.

4-Wheeled "Power Wheelbarrow"

Ed Thornburgh, Marcellus, Mich., built his own 4-wheeled "power wheelbarrow" that's driven by a 5 hp Briggs and Stratton engine.

There are two caster wheels on back. It has a wooden box that measures about 3 ft. square. The engine is mounted directly behind the box and belt-drives the transmission off an old riding mower. The wheels and axle are also off the mower.

The operator steers the rig by holding onto a pair of metal handles. To go forward he pulls down on a thumb-operated clutch located near the right handle, which tightens a belt-driven clutch. The gearshift lever is located just in front of the engine

and has three forward gears and one reverse.

"It works great for hauling firewood to my house and garage," says Thornburgh. "The rear caster wheels let me turn short and get around in tight spots. It's also safe to use. I hold the clutch belt-tightener down with my thumb so if I should happen to fall down, the machine will automatically stop. I also have to hold the gearshift lever down to keep going - as soon as I let go the machine will stop."

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He Grows "Dinner" In A Stock Tank

After reading an article about raising catfish in a barrel, Frank Martin decided to try the idea on his Northport, Alabama, hobby farm. Instead of a barrel, he used a 300-gal. Rubbermaid stock tank. In less than a year he was enjoying catfish that weighed up to 3 1/2 lbs.

He placed the stock tank on cement blocks to make it waist high and installed a 600 gph pump with a bubble nozzle for aeration. He placed the pump, which has foam filters, on a 5-gal. container of lava rocks and marble chips to keep the water clean and filtered.

Because Martin has city water, it needs to be de-chlorinated by letting the water set for 24 hours.

He purchased 100 4 to 6-in. fingerlings from a fish farm and placed them in the tank last spring. He put 2 and 3-ft. long pieces of 4 and 6-in. pvc pipe at the bottom for cover (he had to weigh down the pipe).

"It was amazing how many of them are in the pipes at once," Martin says.

Once a day he feeds them catfish feed purchased at a local co-op. He experimented to figure out the correct quantity - enough to fill them but not overfeed and pollute the water.

Every two or three days, Martin drains off 20 to 30 gal. of water and replenishes it with fresh water. He cleans off the foam filter weekly. Once a month, he washes off the lava rocks and marble chips.

With only a tree to shade the tank, the water temperature occasionally reached 95 degrees, but the catfish survived. Overall, Martin says he lost 15 to 20 percent of the fingerlings, but had no predator problems. Martin enjoyed many good eating catfish that weighed between 1 3/4 and 3 1/2 lbs.

He started another batch of small catfish this spring. "It's like growing fresh corn on the cob," he says, "Only it's catfish for the plate."

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"My home-built no-till caddy lets me plant winter wheat after soybean harvest in one pass. It works as good as new commercial no-till models," says Thomas Field.

No-Till Caddy Built From Old Disks

Thomas Field, Port Dover, Ontario, saved time and money by building a no-till caddy from two old disks and an Alpine liquid fertilizer kit. He pulls an International Harvester 5300 12-ft. drill behind it.

The no-till caddy is equipped with a row of wavy coulters on 7-in. spacings and a pair of 55-gal. liquid fertilizer tanks. A ground-driven hydraulic pump, mounted on the drill, is used to deliver liquid fertilizer to the seed openers.

"I use it to plant winter wheat after soybean harvest. I planted 300 acres with this home-built caddy last fall with no problems," says Field. "In the past, I made separate passes with a disk and field cultivator before using the drill. Or, I hired someone with a no-till drill at a cost of about \$20 per acre. At 300 acres that's \$6,000. My no-till caddy lets me plant in one pass and works as good as new commercial no-till models, which sell for \$12,000 or more. I spent only about \$2,000 to build it. My son Joe helped me."

When the caddy is in the working position, the tongue is 18 in. off the ground, which is the same height as the tractor drawbar.

He started with an old 12-ft. wide White offset disk equipped with wavy coulters on 7-in. spacings and a Case disk, which he used for parts. The offset disk was originally equipped with four gangs of straight coulters. He cut off the back part of the disk, keeping the two gangs on front and the rocker shaft on back that raises and lowers the machine. Then he welded an angle iron frame on back.

The front gangs were straightened out to make one continuous gang running the

width of the machine. He replaced all the disk bearings and also replaced the original straight coulters with wavy ones.

He made a series of mounting brackets on front for adding tractor weights, allowing the machine to put more down pressure on the coulters. Then he made mounting brackets for a pair of 300-gal. liquid fertilizer tanks.

The caddy has a self-leveling tongue on back that always keeps the back of the caddy even with the tongue on the drill. It consists of a 3-in. sq. metal tube inside a 4-in. sq. tube. As the machine is hydraulically raised for road transport, the rocker shaft shoves the 3-in. tube down through the 4-in. tube which shoves the tongue down to keep the drill level with the caddy. "If I want I can use a turnbuckle on back of the caddy to adjust the height of the self-leveling tongue," says Field.

He mounted a hydraulic pump on the drill and ran hoses from it to the tanks and back to the drill. He used an old liquid fertilizer kit

"I plan to use the caddy without fertilizer this spring when I plant soybeans in order to loosen up the tractor's tire tracks," says Field. "I paid \$1,000 for the pump. I already had the Alpine fertilizer kit. It was mounted on an old International Harvester 5100 drill that I'd gotten rid of years ago, but I never used the kit. I paid \$30 apiece for the wavy coulters. I used spacers off the Case disk to keep the coulters in a straight line."

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