Larry McPhail put together a spray system to take moss off shingles and rust off metal roofs. "I like being able to clean a roof without climbing on it," he says.

How He Keeps His Roof Moss-Free

Larry McPhail uses his pickup-mounted spray system to take moss off shingles and rust off metal roofs. "I like being able to clean a roof without climbing on it," he says.

Larry McPhail’s home-built ATV can do anything a manufactured ATV does—and more. It oscillates and articulates at walking speed through rough terrain and muskeg. On level ground, its extra long leaf springs deliver a smooth ride for up to 4 people at 30 mph.

"I’ve pulled 2,000-lb. logs out of the woods with it," says McPhail, a mechanic, who built it for general use on his Onoway, Alberta, property.

The ATV is powered by a 1948 VW Beetle engine and has front and rear differentials from an old Toyota pickup. Steering works off hydraulics, powered by a power steering pump from a Chevy van. The dune buggy tires came from Xtreme Tire in Arvinkle.

"The body is made of 16-ga. sheet metal. The fenders are 10 ga.," Getzinger says. "The whole idea was to make it as light as possible for low ground pressure. It weighs 1,500 lbs."

The big tires and 12-in. clearance provide good traction in snow and rough terrain. "I did a 3:1 gear reduction to gear it low," he adds.

The biggest challenges were modifying the VW transmission and creating a shifter linkage that works with the articulation and oscillation. But the winter-long effort to build it was well worth it, Getzinger says.

"I use it all the time, and it’s totally reliable," he says. "It’s quiet, light and a great machine—as good as any side-by-side." It’s actually better, he adds, because it was much less expensive and can outpull manufactured ATV’s because of its heavy differential and low gearing.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Vaughan Getzinger, Box 1401, Onoway, Alberta T0E 1V0 (ph 780 967-5591; goldminergetz@hotmail.com).

Birds Catch On Fast To Chicken Swing

Chickens really like to swing, says Jennifer Connell, and she has videos on her website that prove it. She got the idea when she needed to pen her flock up all day because of foxes in the neighborhood. “My goal was to give them something to do,” Connell recalls, but when she realized how well the idea worked she started the expensive process of making a marketable product. After years of experimentation she came up with her patented design, which is manufactured from high-quality, UV-resistant molded plastic.

The perch’s texture and mailbox shape allows birds of all sizes to get a good grip and pump the swing to keep it going. A top cross-member keeps the swing from twisting. Rope buckles make it easy to level and adjust the swing’s height. If the swing is set just inches off the ground when first introduced to hens, they often learn how to swing on their own. Older chickens can be taught how to swing using treats. Connell suggests setting the swing about 18 in. to 2 1/2 ft. off the ground; her peacock prefers a higher swing, about 4 1/2 ft.

The Columbia, Mo., entrepreneur began selling The Chicken Swing at the end of 2013 and discovered international interest. She sells the swings for $29.99 through her website, Amazon and a growing number of small retailers.

For DIYers interested in making their own swings, Connell offers a few suggestions. "Look carefully at my design," she says.

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