

SCOTT BELL'S ATV SKIDDER BRACKET

Dragging logs around the woodlot with a small tractor or ATV can present challenges.

It takes a lot of power, especially if the end of the log plows into the ground. The logs tend to pick up mud and rocks, and if a log catches on a stump, it can stall the ATV, or worse yet, cause it to flip over backwards. Faced with these challenges while bringing in firewood, Scott Bell designed and fabricated a bracket for the back of his ATV that lifts the end of the log off the ground for easier

At right, the author attaches the ATV log skidder to the 3-point hitch of an 8N Ford tractor. Although it worked well with the tractor, it would be easy to exceed the skidder's 2,000-pound limit with a larger tractor.

Ethan Chandler of Carthage, Missouri (below) pulls a hedge log with a 300cc Arctic Cat ATV. Even with the front weight (not shown in this photo), the ATV was a little light on the front, but managed to pull the log with no problem. Lifting the end of the log off the ground reduced the power required to drag it.

pulling. A 20-gallon tank mounted on the front of the ATV and filled with sand help keeps the front wheels on the ground. Scott patented the unit, and now offers it for sale. He noted that it is easy to back into tight areas and stores in a small space when not in use. The attached winch helps pull the log to the ATV and can be used to pull the ATV out of the mud if it gets stuck.

The unit worked well on a small tractor, though it would be easy to exceed the unit's 2,000-pound maximum capacity. The

hydraulic lift on the 3-point hitch took all the work out of lifting the log. The choker cable is a good way to bring in several logs at a time, but for single sawlogs, a pair of tongs would make hooking up to the logs much faster.

I pulled a 10-inch-diameter, 14-foot-long hedge log with a 300cc Arctic Cat. The boom of the skidder has a boat winch attached to bring the log up to the ATV, though in most cases, it pulls the ATV backwards to the log. Although the ATV had enough power to pull the log, the front end



SPECS

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It took less than 10 minutes to hook the 90-pound log skidder to the ATV. Setting a 200-pound tank of sand on the front of the ATV was the hardest part of setting it up.

tended to lift off the ground, even with 200 pounds of sand in the tank mounted to the front.

According to Scott, the maximum log weight is determined by the ATV—typically 600 to 900 pounds. It wasn't as maneuverable, but it did move the logs with less power than it would have taken to drag them, and it barely left a scratch on the ground. "It is a matter of using the proper tools for what you need to do," Scott explained.

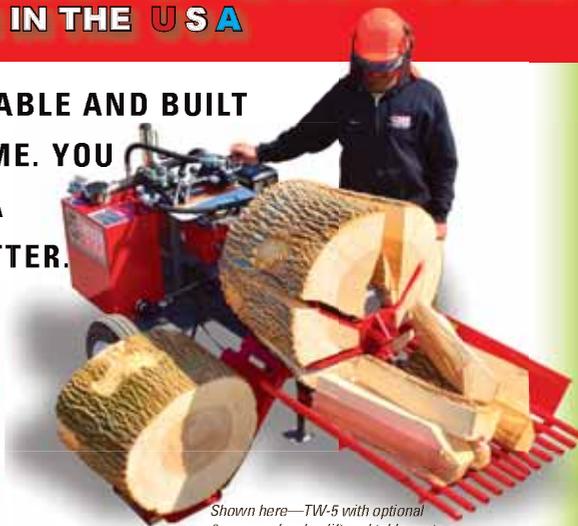
Scott runs a one-man shop; E&S Portable Log Skidders. "I do all my own cutting and welding and assembly," he said. "I am keeping it a family business, to keep the cost down." ■

Dave Boyd has a BS degree in Forest Management and an MS in Wood Technology. He manages a tree farm (2006 Missouri Tree Farm of the Year), and operates a band saw sawmill.

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