



Multitek 2040XP2 Firewood Processor

My trip to interview Doug Cross, the owner of a neat firewood processor, resulted in an informative meeting with an unforgettable character.

Doug and his brother ran Cross Well and Pump Co. for about 40 years, and Doug has run it alone for the past two. But he has an affliction similar to what you find in anybody who works with wood—no, he doesn't have sawdust in his veins or the sugar blues—but he does love splitting firewood. He has been cutting and splitting firewood since his teens and now does it to keep busy during the winter season when his well-drilling busi-

ness is slow.

Winter is not the best season for drilling wells in Maine, so firewood production fills some gaps. Though Doug's current drilling rig operates well in winter, he leases it to others, and thus has time to work firewood a couple of days a week. With a 3-second cutting and splitting cycle, the Multitek enables him to process up to 6 cords an hour, so he could do my whole year's supply of wood in 45 minutes! With full automation, he can carry out the entire operation alone and keep some of his trucks and excavator busy with his firewood business when they are not being used for his drilling business. His

goal is 200 cords a year, but so far he is at about 100 cords and scrambling to fill all of his orders.

Why Multitek?

Doug says he checked out over 100 machines before buying his Multitek, visiting every dealer in Maine and every equipment show in Maine and Vermont. He even had his wife Lois, teach him to use the computer so he could check out all the processor websites and videos. He was completely sold on the Multitek 2040XP2, but a seasonal operation, usually running two days a week, couldn't justify the cost. So he started looking for a used machine and after a four-year



Multitek Model 2040XP2 Firewood Processor

Weight.....	14,000-16,500 lbs.
Max log length	40 ft.
Max log diameter.....	23 in.
Splitter cycle time.....	3 sec.
Infeed system.....	Patented Shuttle Grapple
Wedge option.....	8-way
Approximate cords per hour	4-7 cords

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search found one in mint condition. Despite its great condition, Doug disassembled it, painted all the components, and then put it back together. The sign painter who does his trucks and signs was supposed to reletter the rig but apparently has retired.

Normally Doug processes tree lengths and piles the split wood in large piles to dry. He uses his excavator to feed the log deck, load the truck, and round off the top of the load in the truck. The truck holds nearly 1-1/2 cords, rounded, which he sells as a cord. The processor can handle logs up to 24 inches in diameter, 40 feet long, and I noted two large logs at the side of the yard. Too heavy for the excavator to lift to the log deck, they were set aside to be cut into shorter, lighter pieces. A really nice feature of the

log deck is the grapple that feeds logs to the processor. Chain conveyers have problems moving crooked logs, but the grapple can handle even the worst.

An Impressive Sight!

Doug cleared an area adjacent to his well drilling business office for a wood yard, next to Route 3 a few miles west of Belfast, Maine. Because of recent heavy rains, his yard, set on 1-1/2 feet of gravel, was still wet, yet firm enough for working and hauling—no mud. He normally buys tree-length wood in winter, cuts, splits, and piles it in

winter and spring, lets it dry for several months and then delivers in the fall when it is fairly dry. Winter-cut wood is pretty clean, and he managed to process 65 cords on one chain without having to stop and sharpen it. And the 8-way splitter head makes reasonable-sized pieces from even the largest logs—pieces that would work well in my wood cookstove.

Several days before my visit, he had accumulated 60 cords at the side of the road in three large piles, an impressive sight for passing motorists. I had heard about this from two people, but by the time I

Photos Left: Doug Cross in the cab of his Multitek processor. The small excavator, used to dig trenches for the well business, loads the deck and levels off the wood piled in the truck.

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The 1/2-inch chain can handle wood up to 24 inches in diameter and the 8-way splitter head makes manageable pieces even from the largest logs. One chain cut 65 cords before having to be sharpened.



The Multitek 2040XP2 in operation. Doug shown loading a truck with green wood. Even the saw chips and splinters get used.

got there, he had started breaking down one of the piles and had hauled 10 cords the previous day. The wood, logged in February and processed in the spring, was fairly dry, but when I visited, he was processing wood and loading it directly into the truck for a customer who preferred green wood.

You might get the idea from this neat, well-organized wood yard and the large processor that this was a permanent, stationary operation. The large Multitek certainly gives

an impression of permanence, but the whole rig can be easily moved over the highway and Doug even took it to Belfast to process 8 cords for a relative. This ability to move means opportunities to process for others without them having to bring the wood to Doug.

Even the waste from the processor gets used. The small splinters from the splitter are used to surface an access road to the yard, and chips from the 1/2-inch chain go to a local farm for compost. In return

for the chips, Doug gets all of his veggies free. Doug is totally pleased with the Multitek, and I didn't hear a single complaint from him. ■

Ben Hoffman is a forester with 28 years experience in state, federal, and private (including two years as a private logging contractor) forestry and 17 years in academia. Ben is retired as a Maine Licensed Forester, and Vermont Land Surveyor. He may be reached at ben@mainstream.us.

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