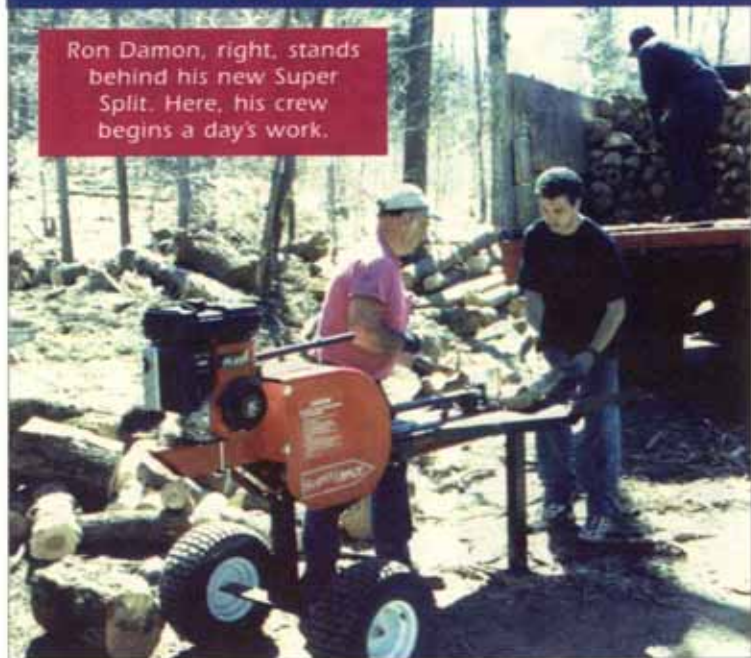


Ron Damon, right, stands behind his new Super Split. Here, his crew begins a day's work.



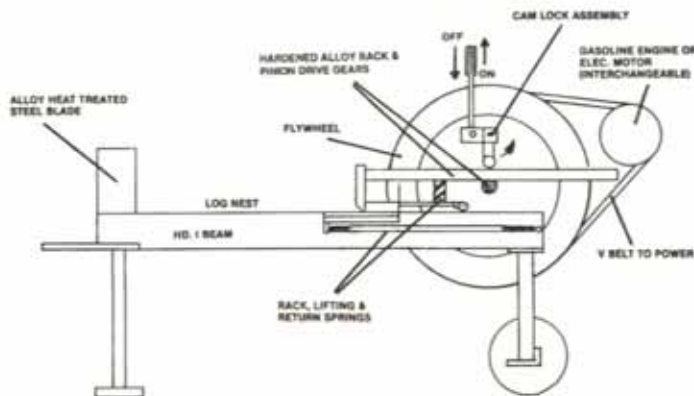
Photos by Bill Gove

## GFX CORPORATION **SUPER SPLIT HD**

Rather than hydraulic power, this unique splitter uses a rack and pinion power drive design that stores kinetic energy for splitting in two revolving flywheels.

By Bill Gove

Over the past year and a half we have reviewed most brands of firewood processors but have stepped around the multitude of wood splitters on the market. There is not a great deal of difference in the basic operation of hydraulic splitters, though I'm sure some manufacturers might take exception to that statement. However, our attention was recently directed



toward a log splitter that stood out as different from the pack. The machine is labeled "Super Split" and is manufactured by GFX Corporation of East Bridgewater, MA.

What is there about the Super Split that is different? It's the drive mechanism, a rack and pinion power drive instead of hydraulic. The Super Split power principle was devised about 24 years ago by a man named Frank

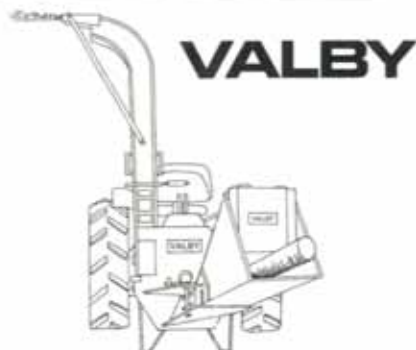
Graney in Wilmington, MA. The business was bought in 1990 by Richard McCann and is now located in East Bridgewater. Richard has since retired and his son Paul now operates the family enterprises.

Frank Graney is a talented machinery designer who now manufactures the "Rip Saw" portable sawmill.

To see the GFX splitter at work, I visited with Ron Damon in Huntington, MA,

a retired school teacher who enjoys being a firewood producer. Damon was a good user to interview, because he used an older model of the Super Split for about 11 years. The splitter did not wear out; it was stolen after Damon had split about 5,000 cords with the machine. So Ron Damon ordered a new Super Split last winter and was quite pleased with the latest improvements on the splitter.

I found Ron parked on a woods road with a stack of low-quality stems of mixed hardwood species piled next to his truck. Glancing over the Super Split at work behind his truck, the most obvious feature, besides the new paint, was the absence of the familiar hydraulic hoses. Noticing how



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CH 250	10" diam.	40+

Sawmill chipper with pulley:

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smoothly and quickly the splitting ram was moving back and forth, my initial question was how the power drive worked. The Super Split's patented power drive was easy to understand, as I soon discovered.

Power on Damon's splitter, the middle sized model of the three sizes made by GFX, is supplied by a 5 HP Briggs & Stratton engine. The power is transmitted by a V belt to a pair of 72 pound balanced flywheels which store up the kinetic energy needed to perform the steady and forceful mechanical function of the splitter.

The flywheels are secured to a one-piece pinion gear which engages



**The rack and pinion drive principle allows for one of the fastest recovery times one could expect from a splitter.**

The Super Split's table design cuts down on the handling of heavy blocks.

with a rack that is fastened to the splitting ram. The rack and pinion drive is engaged by a cam-lock mechanism and disengaged by a spring mechanism at the end of the 24-inch stroke. The spring action also returns the rack to the start position. The kinetic energy provided by the revolving flywheels provides a splitting force of 14 to 18 tons in Ron Damon's model.

Safety and ease of operation are always important matters of concern with wood splitters; again I was impressed. The machine is semi-automatic in that each cycle must be manually activated. A simple lift

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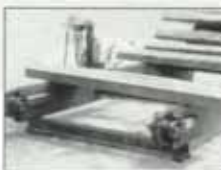
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of the handle will start the cycle and the handle does not have to be held up; once in motion the cycle will be completed.

However, the motion can be immediately stopped at any time. The handle to activate the cycle is located conveniently on the top so that the eyes can remain focused on the wood being split. One tap downward is all that is required to stop the splitting motion if necessary. As with any wood splitter, it is essential for safety reasons that only one person do the operating and the handling of the wood between the ram and the wedge.

The rack and pinion drive principle allows for one of the fastest recovery times one could expect with a splitter. Cycle time

was about 2 to 3 seconds. When a particularly tough block of wood was encountered the flywheel stalled but would only take a half second to recover momentum for another push. Damon has cut and loaded five cords in a day's time with a three-man crew.

The machine's manufacturer points out that an electric motor can easily replace the gasoline motor if the operator wishes. Damon's model would require a 1 HP, 110v AC motor. With the gasoline motor, the machine is quite portable. When Damon wanted to change location, one man raised the machine by the hitch and walked the well-balanced machine along the woods road.

When asked about the

## GFX Super Split Spec Sheet

### MODEL

GFX Super Split SSHD

### POWER UNIT W/HP

Standard: 5 HP Briggs & Stratton

Optional: 1 HP electric

### SPLITTING FORCE

14 to 18 tons

### SPLITTER CYCLE TIME

2 to 3 seconds

### WEDGE (Standard)

Single, heat treated alloy

### MACHINE WEIGHT

445 pounds

### TIRES

Low Speed: Wide balloon

High Speed: With towable trailer kit

### MAX BLOCK LENGTH

25 inches

### OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Power options, production table, trailer kit

SALES PRICE (Before options) \$2,134

### MANUFACTURER

GFX Corporation, 698 Spring St. East Bridgewater, MA 02333 508-378-7100

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improvements he noted on his new Super Split model, Damon pointed out the increased stability with a wider wheel axle for the balloon tires. He particularly praised the table which surrounds the splitting wedge. On the new model it is larger and higher, being level with the top of the I beam which the splitting ram moves along. Thus, once the block of wood is placed on the table, there is no lifting required as the piece is manipulated for splitting. The Super Split can cut lengths up to 24 inches.

As for problems, they have been few and far between. The only one Damon could remember with the old machine was the tendency of the rack to eventually bend. But the

machine was still running well after 11 years.

Ron Damon loads his truck in a most unusual way; he stacks the wood neatly in the truck. When asked why he bothers with the extra manpower that's needed to do so, he replies this assures his customers of an accurate measure. To also please his approximately 200 customers, Damon carefully measures the length of each block of wood before cutting it off with the chainsaw and uses only what he considers to be good quality wood. The species are purposely mixed. Annual production is 500 cords with deliveries in a 50-mile radius. My only criticism of the operation was the inefficiency of the manpower; there were too

many workers for what should be a two or three man operation; and they stood around too much.

To prevent future theft, Damon now chains his wood splitter to a large tree at the day's end and has also taken out an insurance policy. He also plans to weld the nuts on the bottom which hold the

motor on the machine to discourage any temptation to walk off with that part of his splitter. There's little doubt that Ron Damon loves his Super Split and won't let this new one disappear. ■

*Bill Gove is a retired forester who last worked for the Vermont Department of Parks and Forests.*

## MANUFACTURER'S COMMENTS

The Super Split log splitter uses old technology and applies it in an ingenious method to build the fastest, most durable log splitter. It has twin flywheels driving a unique patented rack and pinion design that enables it to produce an incredible 2 1/2 second cycle time. Super Split uses the kinetic energy stored in the flywheels to drive the splitting ram resulting in greater efficiency and much longer engine life. Super Split is so efficient it can out perform the competition with a 110 volt 1 HP electric motor.

Most people think hydraulics when they think wood splitters but once they see Super Split in action they become believers. No warm-up period, no hydraulic fluids, not affected by the cold and minimal load placed on the engine are a few of the advantages. The life expectancy of the Super Split is not yet known. 10,000 plus cords has been reported by more than one owner. The durability of the Super Split is something we take great pride in.

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1-1/4"	x	.035	x	1.3
1-1/4"	x	.042	x	1*
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1-1/4"	x	.042	x	1
1-1/4"	x	.042	x	1.3
2"	x	.042	x	1
2"	x	.050	x	.78

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