



Timberwolf Firewood Splitters

You don't need a large firewood processor for home or farm use or even to become a successful wholesale producer

BY BILL GOVE

In addition to the large firewood processors, there are a number of well-designed wood splitters on the market that are built to handle large wood and receive tough use. The initial cost of a splitter is less and the energy expended is probably greater, but they are powerful little machines. Here we'll look at one model that is suitable for the commercial firewood producer and another that is ideal for a farmer or home owner who wants to put his tractor to use. Both models are made by one of the nation's leading manu-

facturers, Timberwolf Corporation, of Rutland, Vermont.

John Kleis's Commercial Firewood Business

There is an abundance of hardwood trees in central New York State and many homeowners in that area rely on wood for home heat. A few years ago, a young entrepreneur by the name of John Kleis set up a part-time commercial operation to help pay his way through college. Working about three months of the year at his home along the north shore of Oneida Lake, north of Syracuse, John and his two employees, a

Top: John Kleis's commercial firewood operation uses the TW-5. Inset: A.J. Johnson, part-time farmer, completes split with his TW-3HP.

younger brother and another boyhood friend, have been producing about 1,500 face cords of hardwood firewood per year.

While observing the frantic pace of these three young men, I realized that if anyone could succeed in the strenuous business of firewood production, these three should be able to do so.

John started with an American wood splitter about four years ago and last year added a Timberwolf TW-5 splitter, which, he says, has given the business a big boost. With the expansion of the business, John also constructed a large Quonset

structure to house the operation. The dome of the Quonset is covered with fabric that can withstand a load of 400 pounds per square foot.

The Timberwolf TW-5

During my visit, the Timberwolf TW-5 was buried in a constant movement of wood blocks and hardwood refuse, but I could see that the machine was getting a good workout. With each of his two employees operating a splitter, the firewood literally flowed out of the Quonset at an amazing rate.

The TW-5, which is built to handle large, hard-to-split logs, is the manufacturer's most popular firewood splitter among its eight basic models. The TW-5 is powered by an 11 hp Honda engine, which can deliver 25 tons of force with a 10-second cycle time.

John seldom stood still while he kept the two splitter operators supplied with wood blocks. With his

Bobcat skid-steer mounted with a bucket, he brought the full-length logs, which he purchases from local loggers, into the structure and placed them on a rack where the blocks were cut with a chain saw. The bucket on the Bobcat made it an easy task to push the blocks over next to the splitters.

John's markets are mostly local retail and wholesale businesses. Prices vary in the range of \$30 to \$50 per face cord. The face cord is a unit of measurement commonly used throughout upstate New York, referring to a 4-foot by 8-foot tier of firewood about 16 inches in length. Three face cords are therefore equal to a standard cord.

Now John has graduated from college and accepted a position with a brokerage firm. Although he didn't comment on the future of his wood business, he had plenty to say about the dependable performance of his Timberwolf TW-5.

Home and Farm Use

Home and farm use provide a large market for hydraulic wood splitters. I was interested in observing a splitter with a 3-point hitch attachment for use with a farm tractor and, with the help of dealer/distributor Roland Michalski, the owner of South Creek Farm in Lima, New York, I met an enthusiastic user in the Finger Lakes region of western New York State.

A.J. Johnson, of Groveland, New York, took a retirement option from the General Motors plant in Rochester a few years ago and is now experiencing a restful life without a long commute to work each day. He's a part-time farmer, harvesting corn, soybeans, and hay and also enjoys running his trapline while seeking fox, coyote, and coon furs. The area around his home near Conesus Lake has some beautiful rolling hills and attractive farmland interspersed with relatively small hardwood timber lots.

Timberwolf Wood Splitters

Although the company manufactures eight basic models, the two listed below are those featured in the article.

	TW-3HD	TW-5
Weight	660 lbs.	875 lbs.
Splitting force	22 tons	25 tons
Engine	N/A	11 hp
Pump	20 gpm	22 gpm
Hydraulic tank capacity	15 gal.	15 gal.
Max log length*	26 in.	26 in.
* These two models are also available for 36-in.- and 48-in.-length furnace wood.		
Cylinder size	24x5x2 in.	24x5x2 in.
Cycle time	10 sec.	10 sec.
Frame	6.5 in.	6.5 in.
Hitch	N/A	2 in.
Log cradles	STD	STD
Auto cycle	OPT	STD
Wedge lift	OPT	STD
Wedges —4-way is standard; 6-way is optional		
Options —Log lift, table grate		
Price (before options)	\$2,695	\$5,195
Log Lift is \$619 (these are MSRP F.O.B. Rutland, Vermont)		

Manufacturer

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Manufacturer's Comments

The TW-5 is our most popular machine. The unit comes with an 11 hp OHV Honda GX engine, 22 gpm pump, auto-cycle valve, 4-way wedge, and hydraulic wedge lift. The machine delivers over 25 tons of force with a 10-sec. cycle time and will handle hard-to-split logs with ease. It is also available in 36 in. and 48 in. models (for longer logs) and will accept the optional 6-way wedge, hydraulic log lift, and table grate.

Power to the TW-3HD is supplied by a 20 gpm pump, yielding over 22 tons of splitting force. The unit can run on any tractor, 16 hp or greater, that is equipped with a category 1 PTO hookup. The splitter is available in 36 in. or 48 in. models (for longer logs) and will accept the optional 6-way wedge, auto-cycle valve, hydraulic log lift, hydraulic wedge lift, and table grate.

splitting trough with a couple of lips. The grate removes pieces of bark, splinters, and dirt before the wood ever reaches the conveyor or the woodpile.

There are several advantages to a tractor-mounted splitter, not the least of which is the initial cost—as there is obviously no need to purchase a power unit. Another advantage—particularly when wood is scattered

about—is mobility, although A.J. does remove the table grate when moving the tractor.

The Equipment

The TW-5 commercial model, as used by John Kleis, is equipped with auto-cycle valves, which automatically carry through to completion the full 10-second splitting cycle. The auto-cycle is standard equipment on

the TW-5 but is not available on the smaller models, with the exception of the TW-3HD (A.J. Johnson's machine).

Both models are worth considering, particularly by anyone who wants to avoid the higher cost of a firewood processor. ■

Bill Gove is a contributing writer to Sawmill & Woodlot magazine.

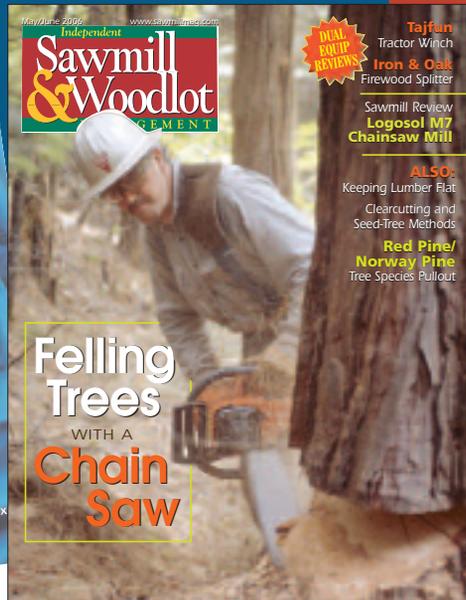
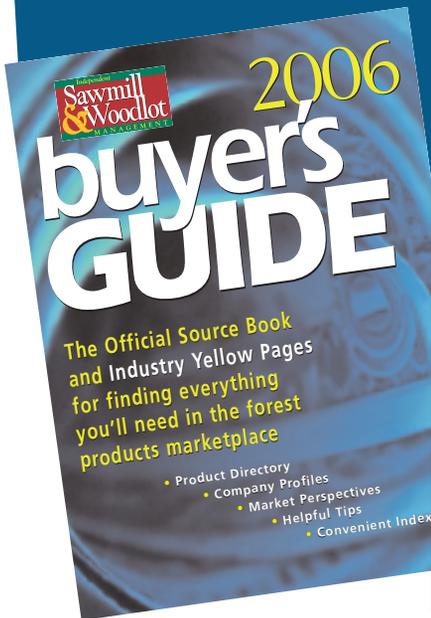


John Kleis and his crew with the TW-5 in the foreground.



The TW-3HD is powered from the tractor's hydraulic system and has a category 1 PTO hookup for the 3-point attachment.

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