

Money-Making Ideas To Boost Farm Income

Artists Shape Trees Into Furniture And Art

Peter "Pook" Cook and Becky Northey grow chairs, mirror frames and people-shaped trees on a couple of acres near their Queensland, Australia, home. The artists created their own techniques of shaping trees which remain planted in the ground but can be harvested later. Their art is called tree shaping.

Cook, a jeweler, decided to grow a chair in 1987 after being inspired by three fig trees twisting together. He later teamed up with Northey and they've been at it ever since.

They have about 70 pieces in various stages of growth. They work mostly with wild plum trees, guiding the growth along wire-shaped paths. The couple is also learning how to work with other trees, including black cherry, red bud, pear, willow, dogwood, hazel and oak.

Their art can take as little as a year for neckpieces to 8 to 10 years for bigger pieces such as chairs or people trees. They sent eight pieces to the World Expo 2005 in Japan, and were told their work had a profound effect on the bonsai community there.

While some pieces are grown to remain planted and alive, others can be harvested and enjoyed indoors, like the mirror frame the couple planted in 1998. It's Northey's favorite piece, with the root system serving

as the mirror's stand.

Cook's favorites are the people trees. "On the day that I first conceived the idea, it was this flash of inspiration," he recalls. "I drew it full height on the kitchen door with a large, indelible ink pen. The excitement of that first realization that I could grow a man is one that still echoes through to today."

Many inspirations come from the natural beauty of the land where they live amid clear mountain streams and rugged cliffs. They let their art grow naturally, but must provide protection from kangaroos and wallabies that like to eat the trees, as well as Goanna lizards that can inadvertently break branches while looking for bird eggs.

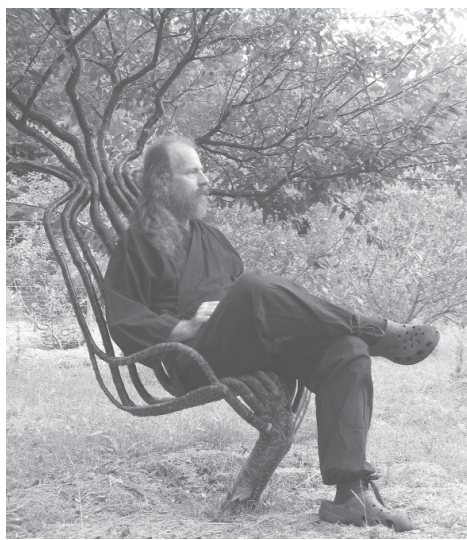
Cook and Northey are writing a book about their technique as well as developing consultation services for others interested in tree shaping.

"Most people seem to think tree shaping takes too long," the couple says. "That's not how it should be viewed, rather think of it like this: The time you spend shaping a tree is captured by the tree, then amplified. A hundred years from now people will be able to see the tree shaping that you did today."

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An Australian couple created their own techniques for shaping trees as they grow. They can harvest the shaped trees later.



They work mostly with wild plum trees, guiding the growth along wire-shaped paths.

Business Is Booming For Doors, Windows, Etc.

Looking for old wood flooring? How about a stained glass arched window or a green glass doorknob? You can find those items and much more at the 140,000 sq. ft. Discovery Architectural Antiques store in Gonzales, Texas.

Brad and Suzanne Kittel started the business a decade ago after running a successful real estate brokerage in Austin. The couple had also purchased and fixed up old homes for resale, and they recognized a market.

"We could never find pieces or parts when we needed them," Suzanne says. By the time they moved to Gonzales, a smaller town to raise their son, they had a network of salvage buyers throughout the country.

"A lot of perfectly wonderful houses are torn down - a lot of times for parking lots," Suzanne says. "The salvagers have to fight for everything they get. Just a fraction of things that could be saved are saved."

The Kittels started buying from the salvagers to fill up an old building they purchased. Now they have several showrooms, eight warehouses and three yards filled with lumber, beams, doors, windows, lights, ceiling tin, hardware and anything else found in homes.

"Our most unusual items may be our large collection of doorknobs and interesting architectural elements - like terra cotta pieces from buildings," Suzanne says. "Most of our customers are building new houses. They want to have the old flooring or beams or stained glass. They like to add just a touch of the old."

Antique doors are one of the business's biggest selling items. "We have a mill to strip, plug, fix and jamb them so they're ready to install," she says. "They're solid wood doors and have a lot more character than newer doors."

Some customers own old houses and want to replace missing hardware or doorknobs, so they send photos of what they are looking for. The Kittels do some sell-



Brad and Suzanne Kittel started up a successful business that supplies items salvaged from old homes. "Most of our customers are building new houses. They like to add just a touch of the old," they say.



ing through their website or over the phone, but Suzanne says customers really should come to the business to see everything that is available. While most customers are from Texas, the Kittels have customers from Canada to Mexico. The business saw a surge of interest after it was shown briefly in a segment of the television show, "This Old House."

While there are many antique businesses throughout the country, Suzanne notes theirs is a little different. "We're just us. We're not an antique mall. No consignments. No dealers. It's just us."

The business is open year round Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Brad and Suzanne Kittel, Discovery Architectural Antiques, 409 St. Francis, Gonzales, Texas 78629 (ph 830 672-2428; bwk@discoverys.net; www.discoverys.com).



"It has a lot of capacity and works fast," says Bernie Riopel about his pto-powered shaving machine. It converts logs up to 22 in. dia. into wood shavings.

Portable Wood Shaving Machine

"Our new pto-powered shaving machine converts logs as big as 22 in. in diameter and up to 8 ft. long into wood shavings for use as livestock bedding. It has a lot of capacity and works fast," says Bernie Riopel, Concord, N.H., who's the U.S. representative for the Canadian-built "Tremzac" wood shaving machine.

The pull-type rig measures 7 ft. 3 in. wide by 22 ft. long and 9 1/2 ft. high. The operator uses a forklift to load logs in over the side. A 24-in. wide, 48-in. long hydraulic-driven carriage on top moves forward and backward across a planer that's mounted on the floor. The planer, equipped with 24-in. long planing knives, converts the logs into shavings. The shavings are discharged out the back by a conveyor, or by an optional blower that also mounts on back. A 10-ft. hose, hooked up to the blower, is used to direct the shavings into a barn, truck, or storage shed, etc.

"It has a capacity of 15 cubic yards per hour which means it can convert a whole container of logs into shavings in just 20 minutes," says Riopel. "It fills a big need because there's strong demand for wood shavings for use as bedding. Dairy producers are having a hard time finding sawdust, because most of the sawdust produced by sawmills is now being sold to pellet mills for use in wood burning stoves. Commercial wood shavings are available, but they're expensive."

Sells for \$42,900. A larger 31-ft. long model is also available that can produce up to 20 cubic yards per hour. It sells for \$46,900.

Available options include conveyor or blower and trailer.

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