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Cheap Alternative to Row Mulcher

Posted by [Nathaniel Bouman](#)

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[Nathaniel Bouman](#)

[Cheap Alternative to Row Mulcher](#)

Registered: 9 years ago

Posts: 81

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Thought I'd pass on this info in case others found it useful. I've been bringing woodchips to trees by wheelbarrow and I needed a faster, less labor intensive way to do this. The row mulchers I've seen online look great but are beyond my budget (my trees are not yet bearing). Same for the side-sliding manure spreaders. Then, I found a used silage wagon on craigslist for \$1,000. I decided it was worth a try.

For those who didn't grow up on a farm (I didn't), a silage wagon (aka forage wagon) is used to collect the stocks/straw vegetative material (silage) left over in a crop field post harvest. The wagon is loaded up, then driven to a silo. A PTO drive is engaged which starts an apron on the floor of the wagon which pushes the silage toward the front of the wagon and drops it onto an auger or conveyor which pushes it out the side.

The whole thing works fine for wood chips.

I did add a small chute to the side ejection to get the chips out a bit farther from the wagon. The wagon works best if I'm trying to deliver chips to the drip line of my trees. If I wanted to circle my trees completely (and close in) I'd have to drop a pile in one spot and then spread by hand. As it is, dropping a nice strip on one or two sides of the drip line is good enough for me at this point.

The wagon is 7 feet wide and about 14 feet long. It does require a fairly substantial tractor, just for the weight. I load the wagon about 1/3-1/2 full and our 45hp JD does the job. Down side is that the wagon doesn't really "eject" the chips more than a couple feet so you have to drive fairly close to the drip line.

Used silage wagons aren't that hard to come by. Probably others have already done this but I thought I'd post in case it helped.

Nat Bouman

Growing cider varieties in Zone 5b

On B.118 at 18X24

Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania

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