

Site Product Reviews

Search ▶

livestock

crops & gardening

tools & equipment

food & kitchen

home & barn

marketing & mgmt

crafts & nature

farm pets

games



GIVE YOUR BABIES SOME TLC
Start with the Best Milk Replacer.

\$5 REBATE

savAcaf
PRODUCTS
SavACaf.com

- [home](#)
- [news](#)
- [calendar](#)
- [resources](#)
- [publications](#)
- [online exclusives](#)
- [community](#)
- [hobby farms rewards](#)
- [my farm](#)
- [say cheese](#)
- [videos](#)
- [hobby farms blogs](#)
- [product spotlight](#)
- [about us](#)

[home](#) > [tools & equipment](#)



Build
my Farm
page ▶

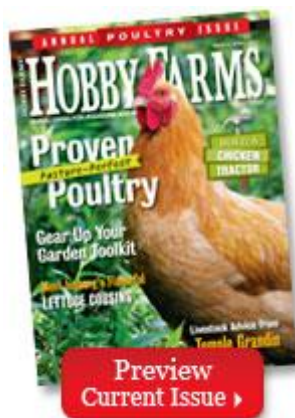
Hot Topics

- [Harvesting Color](#)
- [Happy Potato Accident](#)
- [Happy Holidays, From My Brood to Yours](#)
- [Give Herbal Syrups As Gifts! Biscuit and Bijou](#)



Your E-mail:

SEND ▶



Portable Sawmills

Avoid trips to the lumberyard. Cut your own wood and mill it, too, with a portable sawmill.

By Jim Ruen

1

(Page 2 of 2)

My first task was to cut several large cedar trees cleared from pasture land. Using the Small Log Milling attachment, I quickly sliced away the top slab. Switching to the Mini-Mill, I removed the side slabs to produce a three-sided cant (log with slabs removed from one or more sides). I then remounted the milling attachment for horizontal milling of 1-inch boards. At any point, I could have adjusted the depth of the cut to create beams.

The satisfaction I felt at that point might have been enough to make me a confirmed chain-saw Sawyer. However, a chance conversation with Whichard led to the use of a small band-saw mill. Although the company is less than two years old, they already have sold several hundred units in the do-it-yourself market. When Whichard offered to send me one of their \$2,100 sawmills, I agreed to try it out for this article.

While chain-saw mills have definite benefits, such as low cost, ease of handling, light weight and extreme portability, they do have limitations. For instance, Granberg recommends using them only on freshly cut timber for easier cutting and longer chain life. A key drawback is the size of the kerf or width of the cut. Even with special 1/4-inch ripping chains, a chain-saw mill leaves a lot of wood behind.

Mini Band-saw Mill

Band-saw mills, with their 1/16- to 1/8-inch-thin blades, are much more efficient at turning logs into lumber. They're also better suited for resawing cants or recycled beams into dimension lumber. The two retired engineers who designed the Lumber Smith portable band-saw mill had been frustrated with their experience with a chain-saw mill. Their goal was a low-cost, portable band-saw alternative.



Advertiser Links



Courtesy Granberg International
Granberg International Alaskan
Small Log Milling Attachment



Preview Current Issue >



Preview Current Issue >

Local Guides

[All Local Guides](#)

[Alabama](#)

[Alaska](#)

[Arizona](#)

[Arkansas](#)

[California](#)

[Colorado](#)

[Connecticut](#)

[DC](#)



Courtesy Lumber Smith
Lumber Smith Portable Band-saw Mill

Competitive band-saw mills range from \$2,500 to \$35,000, depending on the bells and whistles. The Lumber Smith has very few bells and no whistles; instead, it offers simplicity, a 105-pound weight and a rugged design. A 5.5-horsepower Honda engine drives the saw blade on its three-wheel frame. Simple adjustments keep the blade running true. One person can easily take the saw to the log, and the saw can be stored in an area as small as 15 square feet when not in use. The company includes plans for a framework made with 2-by-4s and 2-by-6s to hold the log in place and off the ground and keep the sawmill running parallel to the log.

I received my kit in mid-December, just in time for Minnesota to settle into a lengthy period of sub-zero weather. As I attempted assembly in an unheated garage, calls to Whichard were very helpful—something he says is common with new owners.

“It can be a frustrating experience for some people,” he warns. “Assembly and operation does require good mechanical and woodworking skill sets.”

Given the cold weather and deep snow, I opted to try the Lumber Smith inside my garage, resawing a cant I slabbed out earlier in the year. I started the engine and began to make my first cut. With the exception of having to adjust tension and cutting depth, I was soon slicing off 1-inch, 1/2-inch and finally 1/4-inch boards. The optional lift assembly at both sides of the sawmill made depth adjustment easy. It didn't take me long to appreciate the ease of sawing and the narrow kerf as layers peeled away.

Quick Sawmill Comparison

While the Lumber Smith made me a believer in the benefits of band-saw mills, I'm keeping my chain-saw mill, as well. Band saws are significantly more susceptible to embedded metal. Hit a buried nail or even a length of wire buried in a log, and a band-saw blade will be damaged, if not broken. Hit that same metal shard with a chain saw and, while sharpening will be needed, sawing can continue until the board is done. The potential that an urban log could contain metal is one reason many commercial sawyers are hesitant to run them through their mills. I will continue using my chain-saw mills to make clean cants for resawing, milling larger dimension lumber and sawing trees suspect for buried metal.

I think each style mill has its place. Regardless of which lumber milling system appeals to you, never forget power saws are dangerous tools. Wear proper equipment, including chaps; steel-toe boots; a helmet; and eye, ear and hand protective wear. Work slowly and carefully. The results will be value-added, whether you're planning to build a rough garden shed or fine furniture.

About the Author: Jim Ruen lives, writes and works with his gardens and tree farm in the Bluff Country of southeastern Minnesota. Find more tools for your garden and farm shed in his [blog](#).

This article first appeared in the May/June 2010 Hobby Farms.

- [Delaware](#)
- [Florida](#)
- [Georgia](#)
- [Hawaii](#)
- [Idaho](#)
- [Illinois](#)
- [Indiana](#)
- [Iowa](#)
- [Kansas](#)
- [Kentucky](#)
- [Louisiana](#)
- [Maine](#)
- [Maryland](#)
- [Massachusetts](#)
- [Michigan](#)
- [Minnesota](#)
- [Mississippi](#)
- [Missouri](#)
- [Montana](#)
- [Nebraska](#)
- [Nevada](#)
- [New Hampshire](#)
- [New Jersey](#)
- [New Mexico](#)
- [New York](#)
- [North Carolina](#)
- [North Dakota](#)
- [Ohio](#)
- [Oklahoma](#)
- [Oregon](#)
- [Pennsylvania](#)
- [Rhode Island](#)
- [South Carolina](#)
- [South Dakota](#)
- [Tennessee](#)

1

Give us your opinion on
Portable Sawmills

[submit a comment ▶](#)

SUBSCRIBE NOW only \$**13** a year



Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Email:

[continue ▶](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Texas](#)
[Utah](#)
[Vermont](#)
[Virginia](#)
[Washington](#)
[West Virginia](#)
[Wisconsin](#)
[Wyoming](#)



GIVE YOUR BABIES SOME TLC

Start with the Best Milk Replacer.

sav-A-caf
PRODUCTS

SavACaf.com

Ultra 24

\$5 REBATE

Product Spotlight



WORTHINGTON AG PARTS. NEW, USED and REBUILT PARTS for all makes and models of farm equipment. 9 locations nationwide. Order online and save 10%... Promo Code: 05HF12 (*Promo code valid for online parts orders only through 12/31/12)



Agstore.com hitch kits feature lift arms with upward angle of 3" to increase lifting height and true 3-pt linkage control and weight transfer. Fits IHC/Farmall, Allis Chalmers and Oliver.

[Home](#) | [Link to Us](#) | [Related Links](#) | [Dogs for Sale](#) | [Newsletter Sign-Up](#) | [Classified Ads](#)
[Breeder Classifieds](#) | [Community](#) | [Editors and Contributors](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Advertise With Us](#)

[Subscribe to Hobby Farms](#) | [Hobby Farms Subscriber Services](#) | [Subscribe to Hobby Farm Home](#)

[Hobby Farm Home Subscriber Services](#) | [Subscribe to Urban Farm](#) | [Urban Farm Subscriber Services](#)

[Shop Animal](#)

[Network](#) | [UrbanFarmOnline.com](#) | [DogChannel](#) | [CatChannel](#) | [BirdChannel](#) | [HorseChannel](#) | [FishChannel](#) | [ReptileChannel](#) | [SmallAnimalChannel](#)

Disclaimer: The posts and threads recorded in our messageboards do not reflect the opinions of nor are endorsed by BowTie, Inc., Animal Network nor any of its employees. We are not responsible for the content of these posts and threads. Site best viewed with IE 5+

Copyright © 2012 BowTie, Inc. All rights reserved.

[Our Privacy Policy has changed.](#) [Policy/Your California Privacy Rights.](#) [Terms of Use.](#) [Guidelines for Participation.](#)



***Content generated by our loyal visitors, which includes comments and club postings, is free of constraints from our editors' red pens, and therefore not governed by BowTie Inc.'s Gold Standard Quality Content, but instead allowed to follow the free form expression necessary for quick, inspired and spontaneous communication.**