

Cart Platform

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Minor update 21 Jun 2018

Nearly 20 years ago we got one of the little \$70 yard carts from Harbor Freight:



The current model number at Harbor Freight is 38137 (it's \$80 as of this writing) and it's rated to hold 1000 pounds (450 kg). I recently made a simple platform for the top from 1/2" plywood. Here's a picture of it holding a couple of cubic feet of dirt:



I needed to raise a sprinkler up a couple of inches, so I dug out this hole (there's a valve in the hole, which explains why the hole is wider than it looks like it needs to be). The nice thing about the platform is that it can hold two or three cubic feet of dirt and I don't have to put the dirt on the lawn. A side benefit is that if I have to leave the hole open for a few days, I can move the cart if I wish. If I need to use the cart, I can unload the dirt onto a concrete patio and it's easy to put back on the cart when needed.

That piece of plywood came from a waterbed my wife bought about 40 years ago. I coated it with some Olympic water-based acrylic waterproofing coating. I also screwed some bosses to the bottom (made from some of the excess plywood I cut off from the sheet) to allow it to index on the top of the cart:



I'm toying with the idea of screwing two 2x4's to one long and one short edge to make a border to help hold the dirt on the platform (our chickens love to root through the dirt and knock it off the platform). But I haven't made up my mind which edges to put them on.

Note I wrote "Platform for green cart" on the bottom -- that's to discourage grandkids from hauling off the plywood for one of their projects when playing in the yard. ☺

Update 21 Sep 2011: I have used this cart with this platform over the last month or so a number of times and find it quite useful. I gave the top side three coats of a good exterior latex paint when I was painting an outbuilding of ours, so I plan to leave the plywood outside all the time. I used it to unload and haul 11 sheets of 3/8 plywood from my wife's van and it hauled the normally-cumbersome load of plywood quite well. This simple addition makes the little green cart almost as useful as our Garden Way cart (which we've used for 24 years).

Update 10 Aug 2012: I added some sides to the platform earlier this year:



The boards are surplus 1.5" thick stuff that my wife bought from a waterbed place going out of business (we got quite a bit of useful wood from that purchase). The sides are held onto the bottom with some 3/8" lag screws. The corners have some 4" long bugle head screws holding them together.

I've used this 3-sided platform numerous times to hold the dirt when digging a hole. In the last few days, I've dug down to a sprinkler line 18" down to attach two new sprinklers. The hole had to be roughly a cube 1.5 feet on a side (actually, a bit bigger) and the cart/platform held the approximate 4 cubic feet of dirt that came out of the hole. I do have to put bricks under the far side to keep it from tipping over, as the platform is wider than the cart. One of these days I'll make a retractable outrigger wheel for it so that it won't tip when heavily loaded.

Update 21 Jun 2018: I made the outrigger wheels for the above 3-sided platform from "2 by" wood and the worked well. A few years ago I used some 1 inch diameter steel tubing to make a rear axle assembly that widened the track of the rear wheels, reducing the tendency of this cart to tip over when going around corners with heavy loads. This was very worthwhile doing. Finally, I cut the handle off and made an aluminum tube extension with a cross pin and hitch pin that allows me to tow this cart behind my lawn mower. I use this frequently for hauling loads around our property.