

EPA - Biographies

He's finally manufacturing garden cart

Eight years ago Calvin Gibson of East Palo Alto invented a "gravity-balanced" wheelbarrow, and ever since he's been trying to get into the manufacturing business.

Now he says he's finally made it.

The Gibson Manufacturing Co. recently was incorporated with headquarters at the Gibson home, 111 Daphne Way.

Armed with a \$10,000 purchase order from Orchard Supply Co., Gibson secured a \$5,000 loan from Wells Fargo Bank.

He rounded up subcontractors from San Jose to Redwood City. This week he, his sons, and a neighbor's boy packaged the first 50 of the 200 wheelbarrows ordered by Orchard Supply.

Gibson calls his invention a lawn and garden cart, but he said it replaces a wheelbarrow. He has a patent on the balancing mechanism, which he said allows a 1,000-pound load to be dumped with only 16 pounds pressure.

Gibson came up with the idea after he had hurt his back pushing a heavy wheelbarrow. He was working in a feed mill near Bellingham, Wash., at the time.

Gibson works as a tool crib attendant in the manufacturing division of Hewlett-Packard Co. in Palo Alto. He lost his right arm there in 1969 when it was crushed in a hydraulic stamping press. His new cart can be operated by a one-armed man, but he said he didn't have that in mind when he invented it.

The prototype, Gibson said, was welded. "It cost me \$30 to ship it to J. C. Penney in New York," he said. "That took all my profit."

He redesigned a 60-pound model that can be unbolted and shipped in a carton.

Gibson said he's been able to get as far as he has largely through help from Hewlett-Packard. The company made dies for stamping parts for the cart, and it gave him a punch press.

Gibson and his wife, Betty, have 10 children, four of them in college.



Calvin Gibson shows how his wheelbarrow dumps.