

EQUIPMENT REVIEW BY DAVE BOYT



LogRite

FETCHING ARCH

Woodlot owners, arborists, and urban loggers all face the problem of moving logs with a minimal investment in equipment and minimal damage to the remaining trees and the ground.

Skidders use brute force, are too large for many applications, and too expensive and too specialized to be practical for many log-moving jobs. Those of us who move logs with farm tractors—I use a vintage Ford 8N named “Henry”—are often frustrated by logs that overwhelm these machines. After bucking a 24-inch-diameter black oak log into 12-foot sections and finding Henry unable to budge it, I started looking for a better way.

The answer goes back to the days of horse logging when, like me, loggers worked with limited power. The fetching log arch is an elegant piece of equipment that puts most of the weight of a log on

wheels, instead of dragging it on the ground. Its maneuverability makes it relatively easy to move logs out of the woods or out of a yard without damaging other trees, fences, or lawn gnomes.

I purchased my LogRite fetching arch a year ago, after having seen it demonstrated at the 2007 *Great Portable Sawmill Shoot-Out* at the SAWLEX show. I saw Mark Havel hook up an ATV to a 20-inch-diameter oak log, and then drive off with it without any apparent effort either by him or the equipment. Log arches come in a variety of sizes.

How It Works

The fetching arch is designed to handle logs up to a 26-inch diameter. It comes standard with a pair of

Using the fetching log arch the old Ford can easily pull logs that it couldn't budge by dragging.

tongs, but I chose to add the optional hand winch. Operation is straightforward. Simply maneuver the log arch so it straddles the log, lift the handle to lower the tongs around the log, and then lower the handle to raise the log. The arch gives tremendous leverage for lifting the log a few inches off the



The tongs can handle a log up to about 18-in. diameter. Logs up to 26-in. diameter can be lifted with the winch, which can be replaced with a come-along. Lowering the hitch raises the end of the log. The arch over-centers when the log is lifted, and puts little weight on the hitch.

SPECS

LogRite Fetching Arch

Log capacity(diameter)	26 in.
Length capacity(fully suspended)	16 ft.
Weight capacity	2,000 lbs.
Tire size(outside diameter)	24 in.
Maximum width	54 in.
Ball coupler size	2 in.
Arch weight	206 lbs.
Two-man handle weight	71 lbs.
Optional tow tongue and winch weight	30 lbs.
Price (without options)	\$1,800
Optional:	Two man handle, Tow tongue and winch

Manufacturer To find nearest dealer contact:
LogRite Tools, LLC. 77 Industrial Park Rd., Vernon, CT 06066
Phone: 800/631-4791 ■ **E-mail:** info@logrite.com ■ www.logrite.com

ground. Then simply connect the arch to the trailer hitch on the drawbar and off you go. Usually, it is that simple.

Potential Problems

The first problem I ran into was the hitch. With the log raised, I found that the arch was about 4 inches shy of reaching the ball on the tractor. This meant letting go of the arch, starting the tractor, backing up a bit, and trying again. Too far. I had to go back to the tractor to move forward an inch. Once connected, however, old Henry pulled the log out so easily that I kept looking back to make sure it was actually there.

Unhooking the tongs involves unhitching the arch from the tractor and raising the lever arm. Unfortunately, the tongs grab the log again when the arm is lowered, so it requires a sort of dance to hold the arm up while kicking the tongs sideways off the log.

Manufacturer's Comments on Dave Boyt's Fetching Arch Review

As the founder of Future Forestry Products Inc. and the designer and originator of what I call "modern" log arches, I'm always very pleased to hear of another log arch user. LogRite does a great job of manufacturing the arches and log handling tools, but that means I no longer get to talk with customers like I used to. I had a brief time to talk with Dave Boyt when he came out to Oregon for the National Tree Farmers convention last month, but didn't get to discuss how he was using his fetch—dang—as I could have saved him some frustration. I also understand that Dave purchased his arch used, and may not have received an owner's manual or video. Primarily, the fetching arch is for fetching, with a winch line up steep slopes, or by hand in backyards. When a tow tongue and winch are installed, the fetch becomes a forwarding arch, just like the ATV arch—to be left hooked horizontally on the vehicle and the log(s) raised by the winch and cable choker, not with the tongs. Understanding the fetching/forwarding difference will eliminate most if not all the frustration and the arches will perform as designed. The winch and cable choker are integral to the forwarding function and cannot be successfully substituted with any other device. We always welcome phone calls or e-mail questions and are happy to send videos (DVD) of arch uses. LogRite also has all support materials available. —Mark "Forest Dan" Havel

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Consider putting a ball on the front of your tractor or ATV to make it easier to maneuver the arch.

Larger logs pose a bit of a problem for scrawny guys like me. I just don't have the weight to lift the big ones, even with the mechanical advantage provided by the arm. There are two solutions for this. One is to attach a rope from the end of the arm to the trailer hitch, then drive forward. This pulls the arm down and lifts the log. I have not had problems pulling logs out with the arch tied to the tractor.

The Winch

Another way to handle the bigger logs is with the optional winch. The 3/8-inch choker line is stout enough to pull anything. Just wrap it around the log, and crank it up off the ground. The winch has two gear ratios, and can be used as a compound pulley to double the lifting force—though I have never found this necessary. The winch and choker chain also make it possible to pull out several pole-sized pieces at a time, which saves trips.

The winch is also useful for pulling logs out of tight places or moving around ends of logs so that the arch can straddle it. Unfortunately, the arch and the cable are far stouter than the winch. I bent the frame of the winch when a log caught on a stump. LogRite was quick to replace it, but the second winch soon suffered the same fate, so I replaced it with a come-along.

Another place where the arch has come in useful is pulling logs up steep hills. With the tractor anchored at the top of the hill, and the arch attached to the log at the bottom, the tractor winch can pull the log up without disturbing the ground. As the winch line pulls on



Hitching the arch to the tractor was frustrating until I mounted a second winch to the hitch to pull the arch up to the tractor.

the arch, it lifts the log and pulls it up the hill with a fraction of the power required to drag the log.

I have tied the arch to an anchor tree and used the winch to urge a stubborn tree to fall in the desired direction when wedges were impractical. This works particularly well on smaller trees. I have also seen the use of the arch to pull back the butt end of a hung tree so that the tree will fall safely.

Modifications

A few modifications to my arch have made it a little more user friendly. The first thing I did was purchase an inexpensive winch and mount it on the end of the lever arm so that I could pull the arch up to the hitch on the tractor when it comes up short. This has proven to be a real time saver. A little grinding on the tongs lets me use them on the end of the choker cable, which makes it easier to connect to logs when winching them out. A thin rope to the tongs holds them open when attaching and releasing logs, eliminating that "dance." Finally, a zip tie makes a great way to fasten a cant hook to the arch. A couple of future modifications are a chain saw holder and an electric winch to replace the come-along.

The arch often accompanies me to portable milling job sites when the customer doesn't have a good way to yard up the logs. It is light enough that two people can load and unload it by hand and it just fits on the back of my old flatbed Chevy. It has also given me a means to pull the occasional walnut or cherry log out of someone's yard without tearing up the lawn. As I am the only person in the area willing to risk cutting these logs, this type of work has become more regular.

After a year, I am still learning to use the arch. It is sturdily built, and except for the winch, has been up to the task of handling any log that I have needed to pull out of the woods. The impact on the ground is so minimal that it is often difficult to see where it has been. A further advantage has been less wear and tear on the tractor and less fuel consumed. It has become almost as much a part of my logging as the chain saw. ■

Dave Boyt has a BS degree in Forest Management and an MS in Wood Technology. He manages a tree farm (2006 Missouri Tree Farm of the Year), and operates a band saw sawmill.