

Tough Digger for Gnarly Ground

TE 46 Combihammer
Hilti Corp.
866/445-8827
www.us.hilti.com
Street price: \$800



by Benjamin Timko

Let's face it: Digging postholes can be a challenge. Rocks and gas-powered augers don't always mix well. After renting a jackhammer several times last summer for a few tough footing holes, I concluded that our company trucks needed to carry a tool that could combat our rocky Pennsylvania soil.

Both electric- and air-powered jackhammers are extremely heavy and bulky, however, and they'd take up precious space in our trucks. Plus, they're an absolute back-breaker when placed into a 36-inch-deep posthole.

Happily, Hilti had a solution to our problem: the TE 46 Combihammer. This lightweight, compact, and pow-

erful electric-powered jackhammer has become a blessing to our company. Just flip a switch and it instantly becomes a hammer drill. With an array of chisel points, as well as a variety of masonry drill bits ranging from $\frac{5}{16}$ inch to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, there is no job too big or too small for the TE 46.

Whether you're chiseling rock from postholes, mounting vinyl railing on concrete, or drilling holes through foundations, the TE 46 is a must-have. It's been a great time-saver for our company.

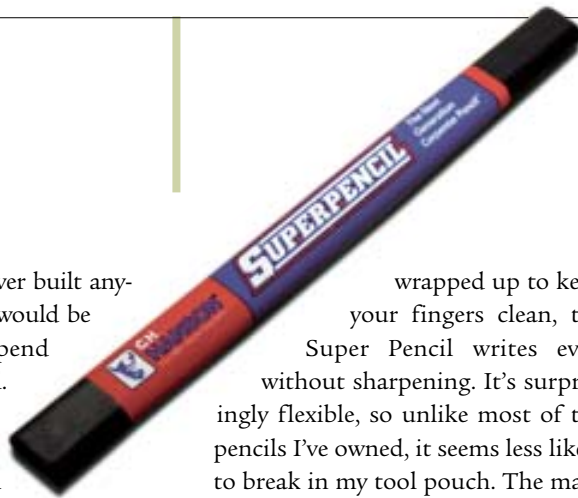
Benjamin Timko is a deck builder in Clearfield, Pa.

The Last Pencil You'll Ever Need

Super Pencil
C.H. Hanson
800/827-3398
www.chhanson.com
Street price: \$5

Anyone who has ever built anything with me would be amazed that I'd spend five bucks on a pencil. Pencils are free at any lumberyard worth its salt, and buying one would have my frugal Scottish grandparents spinning in their graves. But the Super Pencil just might be worth it.

Made from solid graphite and



wrapped up to keep your fingers clean, the Super Pencil writes even without sharpening. It's surprisingly flexible, so unlike most of the pencils I've owned, it seems less likely to break in my tool pouch. The manufacturer claims the Super Pencil will outlast seven regular carpenter's pencils, meaning that it's seven times more likely you'll have a pencil when you need one. — *Andy Engel*

Tool Tip

Every one of my company's trucks carries both a left- and a right-tilting circular saw. Having both saws makes it possible to safely cut any angle on the ends of cantilevered joists. The "lefty" will also cut angles up to 60 degrees, whereas most right-hand saws will cut up to only 50 degrees. — *B.T.*

Ladder Storage

Sliding Ladder Rack
Knaack Mfg. Co.
800/456-7865
www.weatherguard.com
Street price: \$185

A stepladder is one of the most useful tools in my quiver, but it's one of the least convenient to store and retrieve. Stuff always ends up stuck between its rungs, and disgorging a 15-pound stepladder from my truck often entails moving about a hundred pounds of other junk out of the way. Sure, I could strap the ladder to the top of my pickup cap where it's easily stolen and often crusted with ice, but I don't like doing that.

Knaack (pronounced K - nak) must



have felt my pain. The company came up with the Weather Guard Sliding Ladder Rack. It's said to hang a ladder up to 8 feet in length from the inside of the roof of a van or pickup cap. A

tension-locking device keeps the ladder hanging, and the cradles that hold the ladder adjust for a variety of lengths. — A.E.

Ladder Leveler



The Equalizer
Werner Co.
888/523-3370
www.wernerladder.com
Street price: \$180 to \$250,
depending on ladder size

When a deck builder needs an extension ladder, the odds are it's because the ground slopes away from the house substantially enough to place the deck high in the air. And sloping ground can make setting up that ladder tough. Although OSHA and our insurance companies would disapprove, I'll bet there's not one of us who hasn't set up a ladder on slop-

ing ground by propping up one side rail with some combination of scrap lumber and cast-off bits of masonry. The older I get, the more I realize how lucky I am to be this old.

Werner Ladders has a solution that you, your crew, and those big agencies and corporations concerned with your safety will like. Ladders factory-equipped with the Equalizer provide up to 8¹/₄ inches of adjustment from one side of the ladder to the other, enough to set the ladder up on any legal stair, as well as on the slope of most backyards. A leveling bubble built into the bottom rung eases getting the adjustment right. — A.E. ❖