

provided some soil improvement or even nutrient availability to the plant.

If this were a scientific article I would have to look up references for the statements I have made and would have to indicate the statistical probability that the figures shown could have occurred by chance, and I certainly couldn't extrapolate from blueberries to azaleas. So be advised that this is not a scientific paper and is intended only to stimulate your own experimentation. The fact is that no other situation is exactly like yours, so even the most exacting conclusions of research may not apply without modification.

Reference:

(1) Progress Report, Jan. 1983-Dec. 1984. Hammond Research Station, LA Agr. Exp. Sta. pp.32-37.

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In Praise of the EZcart

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One day last year, the other volunteers working on the George Harding Memorial Azalea Garden were surprised and amused when Milt Lerner brought a new garden cart to the work site. It was called an "EZcart," and it looked more like something a child might use at the beach than a serious gardening tool. After trying it, mostly to humor him, within a few weeks we each had one, and at least one person bought several of them.

The EZcart is just under two feet wide by just over two feet long by seven inches high. Three sides slope very slightly outward, and the front slopes forward at a 45° angle. It is made of a thin, hard and very strong plastic, probably fiberglass. The handle is the same size as the cart, made of 3/4-inch pipe, and bends up to be two feet off the ground when the cart is at rest. The two black plastic wheels are one foot in diameter, so the bottom of the cart is only five inches from the ground and the top is one foot from the ground. The cart rests on a pipe skid at the rear. The sketch shows the overall shape of the cart and the arrangement of its parts.

As an engineer, I admired the attention to detail that is apparent in the design of the EZcart, from the shallow form-fitting packaging it comes in, to the use of thumb screws instead of ordinary nuts and bolts throughout that permit assembly without tools. As a gardener, I admire the strength and utility of the EZcart. While it has a stated capacity of about 100 pounds, my wife and I have carried at least twice that much in the course of using it as a ball cart for some balled and burlapped Japanese maples we moved. With a very heavy load it bends and squeaks somewhat and it pulls better than it pushes over soft or uneven surfaces, but it doesn't break.

The biggest plants I ordinarily move are "1-man trees" (about 75-pound root balls), and the rootballs of these Japanese maples ranged from 150 to 300 pounds—while I could roll them, or drag them with great difficulty, I definitely couldn't lift them. We had no problem moving them with the EZcart, however. For each one, we dug a flat ramp the width of the cart from ground level to slightly below the bottom of the root ball, tipped the tree back, ran the sloping front of the cart under the root ball, tipped the tree onto the cart, and dragged it off to its new home. One person can do all of this, although it is much easier with one person handling the tree and one person handling the cart. Then, after digging a hole for the tree, we dug a similar ramp for the cart, and reversed the process to ease the ball out of the cart into the hole, without ever lifting the tree, and with no trauma to the root ball from dropping it. It should work similarly for stones which are too heavy to lift, yet too small for heavy equipment.

We have also used the EZcart with great success for ordinary wheelbarrow or garden cart tasks, such as moving small plants, leaves, garden trash, dirt, gravel, stones, mulch, firewood, tree trunks and tools. While it won't hold as much as a wheelbarrow or a large garden cart, being so close to the ground makes it much easier to shovel into or to lift heavy things into. When it comes to unloading, it is about as easy to tip a load out as with a wheelbarrow, and much easier than with a large garden cart. In short, the EZcart is a great addition to your arsenal of garden tools, and it costs around \$25.00 from Home Depot, Lowes, Sears, etc. □

