

Yard and Garden - 01-26-2013 - Ted Griess / Extension Horticulture Assistant

Have you ever wondered about the machines that helped to create civilizations or about the people whose ingenuity created them?

Under normal situations, I would have answered no to both of those questions, but, recently, I received an unusual email which caused me to ponder the importance of one such machine and how it has made laboring in my yard easier. Chances are you, too, have one of these machines in your arsenal of gardening equipment.

I particularly recall when Rita and I first got married, I insisted we purchase this particular machine. Now showing its age, rusty with extensive wear and tear, it remains a gardening machine we continue to use frequently.

Before I reveal this valued, practical machine's identity and how you might help me with the strange email request I received, let's take a moment and step back in time.

While attending grade school, in science class we learned about simple machines. Simple machines are nothing more than simple tools used to make our work easier. There are six simple machines: the inclined plane, the wedge, the screw, the lever, the pulley and the wheel and axle.

In science, we also learned that work is defined as force acting on an object to move it across a distance. Pushing, pulling, and lifting are all common forms of work. By combining simple machines, we create compound machines that make work much easier.



From information I gathered, the first record of this compound machine indicates it was designed in A.D. 200 by a general in the Chinese Imperial Army. General Chuko Liang realized the device could be used to transport large quantities of military supplies along narrow embankments. Liang's invention had a single wheel and axle. The wheel was positioned so the

center of gravity from the load would be directly over the wheel. Thus, the Chinese wheelbarrow was invented.

Europeans didn't start using the wheelbarrow until the Middle Ages. They changed the design by placing the wheel in front. Engineers claim the European wheelbarrow is not as efficient as the Chinese wheelbarrow. With the European wheelbarrow, the load is only partially supported by the wheel. The operator must lift a large portion of the load. Both the European and Chinese models are available today.



My wheelbarrow is a European model. To successfully operate this machine, a certain degree of lifting and balancing is required. Without it, I'm quite certain Rita and I would have experienced additional back pain by having to bend over, lift and carry 100% of the load. Over the years, many a pile of soil, sand, brick, stone and even small trees have been transported throughout our landscape using this valuable machine.

Now that I've revealed the identity of this valuable gardening machine, let me explain the strange email I recently received. True Temper®, a well-known manufacturer of gardening tools, sent me an email, pleading for my help. The title of their email was *Save the Wheelbarrow*.



It appears the board game Monopoly® is running a promotion on their Facebook page called *Save Your Token*. They are requesting fans to vote for their favorite tokens and to vote for a new token. Ever since I can remember, the race car, the thimble, the Scottie dog, the battleship, the hat, the iron and the wheel barrow have been the tokens used in the game of Monopoly®. Effective February 6, 2013, Monopoly® will retire one of these classic game tokens. One will be locked up forever, replaced by a new token. As I write this column, the wheelbarrow is in last place.

As a fellow gardener, I am sure you, too, have come to appreciate the labor-saving value of the machine we call the wheelbarrow. From one gardener to another, I urge you to go to the website <https://apps.facebook.com/saveyourtoken/> and vote. Let us not allow the wheelbarrow to go directly to jail and never pass GO again.