

SCHMIDT CONSULTING

Bird Feeder Winch

Tom Schmidt

1/15/2022

tom@tschmidt.com

<http://www.tschmidt.com>

We put a bird feeder on our shed and used a cleat to raise and lower it. We take it down in the summer due to hungry bears and to minimize the number of birds killed by our cat. It worked well enough but you need to use gloves to protect your hands to wind the wire rope around the cleat and when full the feeder is rather heavy. I was searching for a better method when I found a hand crank winch on eBay. Even the smallest is gross overkill for this project but I thought I'd give it a try.

Overview

I was looking around for a better way to raise and lower the feeder when I found a hand operated winch on eBay. It is rated at 600 lbs., grossly more than we need but I was unable to find anything smaller. I toyed with using an electric winch but that would have been difficult to install and much more expensive.



Before

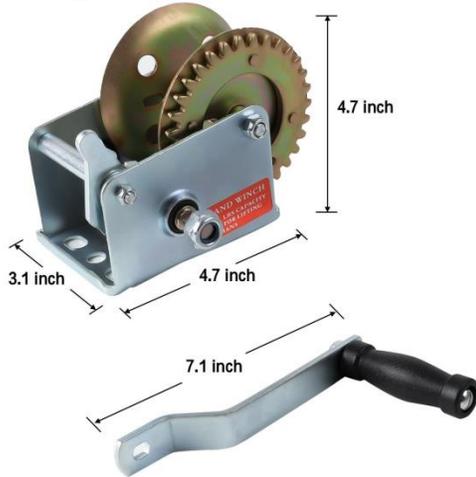


After

Construction

I bought the smallest hand operated winch I could find and some 1/16" wire rope.

600 LBS
Product size



Hand winch



1/16" Stainless steel wire rope

The winch needed to be mounted perpendicular to the face of the shed. I cut a short section of pressure treated 2x4 then bolted the winch to it. Then I drilled two holes in the 2X4 and used 5" GRK construction screws to attach it to the shed.

Normally the winch comes with a much thicker wire rope but I managed to find one that did not include the rope. I attached the 1/16" wire rope to the drum and mounted the winch to the shed. The rest of the bird feeder arrangement was left unchanged. The rope goes up the wall to a hook eye and then over to a small pulley supported by a heavy L bracket. The rope is then attached to a swivel hook clip. This allows the feeder and rain shield to be easily removed in the summer and for cleaning.

Operation

To raise the feeder the winch ratchet mechanism is engaged and crank turned clockwise. Due to the small size of the drum axle and wire rope this requires a lot of turning, but it is easy. To lower the feeder the handle is held stationary and the ratchet disengaged. Depending on how much seed is in the feeder the weight of the feeder may be enough to unwind the rope by itself or it may need the crank turned counter clockwise to unwind.

When the feeder and rain shield are removed during the summer the swivel hook is clipped to a cup hook above the winch to prevent the wire rope from being blown around dangerously by the wind.