

CANT HOOK

By Oliver Cameron
with Ole Wik

There's a rather simple tool in the lower left hand corner of the photograph, between the plane and the ulu. That's a small log wrench.



The whole tool isn't all shown there. It's designed to be used with a piece of birch that you stick through that ring.

I have a fairly thick walking stick that's maybe two inches in diameter, or a little more. I use in any way that you might use a fairly skookum^{1,2} stick. By sliding it through the ring on that tool, in effect I have a portable cant hook.

It's a real handy thing when I'm out working a log that isn't real big, and yet I need to pry it to roll it over. It's similar to a peavey, except that a peavey has a point on it.



Clip Art Image of Cant Hook and Peavey



Example of a cant Hook in Action (lauralynnphoto.com)

If I remember right, I made the whole thing, including the ring, from quarter-inch rebar, with the ends just hooked together. I use rebar for various things. You can just file the corrugations off to make it smooth.

One of the requirements of rebar is that it be soft enough that you can bend it into a fairly short curve without breaking it, and yet the steel has quite a bit of carbon in it, so it's quite stiff. You don't want it to stretch too easily when using it for reinforcing concrete. I had to anneal it in order to bend it.

The part that's off the corner of the picture has a very short bend right at the end of it, shaped like the hook. That's what digs into the log. The hook is maybe three-quarters of an inch or one inch long, and is at roughly right angles to the body of the blade. It was round to start with, but I flattened it so that it would take more pressure to straighten it out.

The whole tool, from the ring to the end, is maybe 10 inches long. The entire length of the blade has quite a bit of curve to it. If it's too straight, the hook won't bite into the log.

Where the blade meets the ring, I just flattened the rod and drilled a hole through it. The hole is probably filed out a little bit oblong so that there's room for the hook to swing up. You can get hold of the hook and hold it close to the handle, if you want to.

Did you dream that up this design?

I can't remember. I've never seen one like it. I have a couple of large peavies, or a peavey and a cant hook. It's just an obvious adaptation.

Some cant hooks and peavies have a sort of funnel-shaped pocket for the wooden handle to fit into. I've seen pictures of others that just had a strap running around to make a circle. That kind of strap is rather wide, so that it has quite a bit of surface against the wood. The ends are made in such a way that the strap can be bolted onto the handle.

I don't know how they attached the blade so that it was able to swing loose. Maybe there was heavy enough steel so that a bolt could be put through both ends of the strap and through the end of the peavey hook. That may have been where I got the idea for using a ring there.

I've used this tool a lot. You can drop it in a sled bag and go, and if you need it, you've got it.

1) This essay stems from a series of telephone conversations that Ole Wik had with Oliver between December 2007 and February 2008. Highlighted text indicates remarks made by Ole.

2) **Sturdy, substantial, strong. "Skookum is a Chinook Jargon word that has come into general use in the Pacific Northwest."** (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skookum>)