Garden Tractor "Reversed" To Make Zero Turn Riding Mower

"I had thought about turning a riding mower around for years. When I read a story in FARM SHOW about how an Illinois man reversed his Deere garden tractor (Vol. 21, No. 5), I was inspired to get started on my project," says Ernest Bueckert, Austion, Manitoba. He turned an old Case 444 hydrostatic drive garden tractor into a zero-turn mower by reversing it and mounting a big 54-in. deck on front.

Bueckert paid $100 for the tractor which did not have an engine. He equipped it with a Briggs & Stratton 18 hp gas engine. He used sheet metal to build the 54-in. deck which is equipped with a right angle gearbox. The deck's three blades are belt-driven off a shaft that in turn is belt-driven off the engine crankshaft.

The front side of the deck is supported by a pair of 10-in.. high castor wheels off a Deere combine pickup.

The mower's power steering was provided by a hydraulic pump and steering column off a Deere 6600 combine. The pump has a built-in flow divider, allowing one hydraulic circuit to operate the tractor's hydrostatic drive and the other circuit to operate the power steering system. Bueckert bought a new seat for the tractor and mounted a home-built fuel tank under it.

"It works as good as any commercial zero turn mower, and I saved a lot of money because I built it for less than $2,000," says Bueckert. "It'll go up to 7 mph but I generally mow at 2 to 3mph. The deck is raised or lowered manually, but with some modification could be hydraulically operated. I had been using a belly-mounted mower on a Case 446 garden tractor. I like the front-mount deck much better because it turns sharper so I don't have to do any hand trimming.

"Lawn clippings are discharged out the back of the deck instead of the side, which I think is a great improvement. The blades last much longer without needing to be sharpened and they cut easier, too, because they don't have to move material to the side."

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Ernest Bueckert turned a Case 444 hydrostatic-drive garden tractor into a zero-turn mower by reversing it and mounting a 54-in. deck on front.

Pto-driven, drawbar-pulled mower was built out of an old military truck frame and other miscellaneous parts. It cuts a swath 5 ft. wide.

Low-Cost Bush Hog-Type Mower

Using an old military truck frame and other miscellaneous parts, John Jones of Magazine, Ark., built his own low-cost Bush Hog-type mower.

The pto-driven, drawbar-pulled mower cuts a swath 5 ft. wide. Jones uses his small Ferguson TO 20 tractor to pull it. The sides and back of the deck are off the truck frame, with a 3/16-in. sheet metal top welded on. The machine's two blades are shaft-driven by a gearbox mounted on top of the deck. The deck is supported on back by a pair of 12-in. rubber wheels. A single hydraulic cylinder, attached to a crosswise steel pipe on back, is used to raise or lower the deck. A length of chain from each side of the crossbar forward to another crossbar on front, which keeps the deck perfectly level as it's raised or lowered.

"I use it to cut our lawn and to cut weeds along roadsides," says Jones. "I had been using a 3-pt. mounted mower, but we have a lot of hills and whenever I lifted the deck I could barely steer the tractor. I made the pto shaft and got the wheels, blades and gearbox off another mower. My only cost was for a couple of hydraulic hoses. I also had to install a one-way remote hydraulic valve on my tractor."

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Deere "L" look-alike is powered by a 20 hp, 2-cyl. engine off an old pull-type combine.

Home-Built Garden Tractor Looks Like A Deere "L"

"I use it to plant and cultivate in our garden," says Walter Paschke, Forest River, N. Dak., about the tractor he built from scratch to look like an old Deere "L".

The tractor's 20 hp, 2-cyl. engine came from a 1940's Deere pull-type combine while the 5-speed transmission is out of a 1934 Dodge truck. He used a 1932 Dodge car for the frame. The rear axle is from a 1937 Studebaker car. Paschke narrowed the axle down 2 ft. Parts from an old Deere belly-mounted cultivator were used to build the 3-pt. hitch. The hydraulic cylinder that's used to lift the 3-pt. is from the power steering system off a Case combine.

"I built it way back in the early 1950's, and it has been a great chore tractor for me over the years," says Paschke. "I call it my Little John tractor after my son John. I had a full line of tools built for it so I can use it to do everything from planting to cultivating and harrowing. The engine sounds just like a real 'L'. Top speed is about 15 mph, which is about the same top speed as the real L tractor could go.

"The 12.5L -15 rear tires are off an old fertilizer applicator. The tires are filled with fluid for more weight. The front tires are off a boat trailer."

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Riding Mower Deck Converted Into Low-Cost Pull-Behind Mower

Carl Park, Hobart, Ind., turned a junked-out 48-in. deck off a Woods riding mower into a low-cost "towing mower" that he pulls behind and to the side of his 42-in. Sears Craftsman riding mower.

"It lets me mow my one-acre lawn in only about 45 minutes, compared to 1 1/2 hours with just the riding mower," says Park, noting that his tow-behind deck could also be pulled behind an ATV.

He paid $10 for the junked-out deck. He used scrap steel to build a frame around it and added an 8 hp electric start gas engine. The pull-behind deck rides on four 10-in. pneumatic tires. The front two are castor wheels. All four corners of the deck can be manually adjusted for height. The deck is attached to the tractor by a telescoping tow arm.

The most unique part of the pull-behind mower is that Park can operate it without ever getting off the tractor. A remote control electrical "handy box" clips onto the tractor's right fender and contains all controls including the choke, throttle, starter button, kill switch, and a switch that controls two lights that he mounted on the deck.

The pull-behind mower's blades are engaged by pulling on a rope from the tractor seat. The rope is connected to an idler pulley that engages the blade clutch.

"The 12 1/2 hp Sears tractor has no trouble pulling it," says Park. "I can go right around trees and shrubs without missing anything. I overlap the two decks by about 6 inches so my total cutting width is about 7 ft. I use the telescoping tow arm to regulate cutting width. All I have to do is loosen two bolts.

"The engine on the add-on deck has a built-in generator that always keeps the battery charged. I wrapped all the wiring for the remote controls in black tape and then placed them inside a 1/4-in. diameter rubber hose that runs up to the control box."

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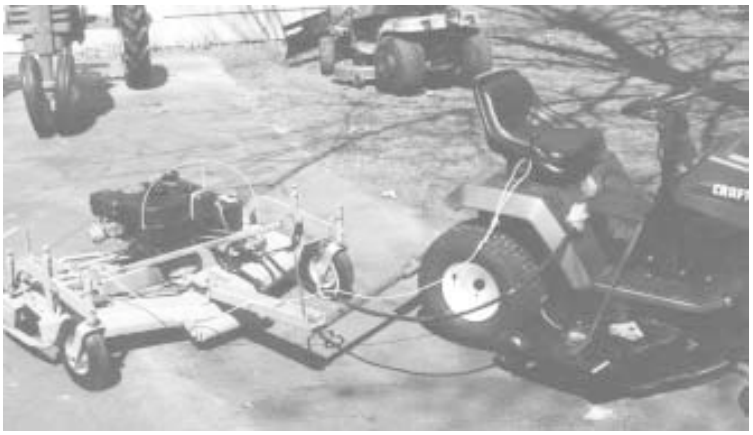

Park pulls 48-in. deck behind and to the side of his 42-in. Sears Craftsman riding mower.