

Narrow Wheel “Tractor” Cuts Through Wheat Fields

Lawrence Grabber, Hemingford, Neb., wanted a machine that would let him “walk” through wheat rows without doing damage. So he removed the wheels from a garden tractor and mounted it on a subframe fitted with three narrow wheels just 2 in. wide.

The 3-wheeled, 5-ft. wide rig is designed to straddle six 10-in. rows. The front 26-in. wheel came off a motorcycle and mounts on the original fork, while the 42-in. dia. rear wheels were made by a local machine shop and are covered with hard rubber.

“I use it to control wild rye in wheat fields. The narrow wheels work perfectly because they’re strong, yet small enough to slip through the crop with almost no visible damage,” says Grabber.

He used 2-in. sq. tubing to build a subframe that bolts to the back end of the garden tractor. Another frame bolts onto the subframe and extends forward under the tractor where an angled section welds to the motorcycle forks.

The tractor axle direct-drives the large rear wheels through a flexible coupler that lets the long axle pivot a bit without breaking.

“It works great and saves a lot of walking,” says Grabber. “I used it for the first time last summer and liked it so well I built a second model. I use them in wheat fields but they could also be used for spot spraying in row crops. You could make any wheel widths or spacings that you want. If I want I can change back to the original wheels for other jobs. It takes only about 10 minutes to unbolt the frames from the tractor.”

The rear wheel rims are made out of light, 2-in. wide channel iron. A cable wrapped tightly around the wheel inside the channel iron holds the hard rubber against the wheel rim.

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Lawrence Grabber says his home-built, narrow wheel “tractor” cuts through wheat fields without doing damage.



The 42-in. dia. rear wheels are covered with hard rubber.



Tractor is fitted with three narrow wheels just 2 in. wide.



Front 26-in. wheel came off a motorcycle and mounts on the original fork.



Tractor axle direct-drives the large rear wheels through a flexible coupler.



“I wanted something that could handle rough ground. It seeds right through rocky ground thanks to the Baker Boot shank openers on it,” says Scott Jones.

Rocks Don’t Bother Home-Built Sod Seeder

Rocks don’t stop Scott Jones when he heads out to pasture with his sod seeder. It just rolls right over rocks, thanks to the Baker Boot shank openers from New Zealand that he used on his built-from-scratch grass drill.

“I wanted something that could handle rough ground,” says Jones. “A lot of disk openers hit a rock, and they don’t work so well after that. These shanks will bend sideways and even backward when they hit a rock.”

The only new factory parts are the New Zealand shank openers. He built the rest of the seeder from scratch except for the seed box which came from an International Harvester drill. The 12-ft. wide frame is constructed from 3-in. sq. tubing and mounts on a 3-pt. hitch. Trailing gauge wheels provide depth control, while a turnbuckle system on one drive wheel controls seed distribution. To keep the cost down, there are no hydraulics.

The cost of the drill was around \$10,000 (Canadian). Three rows of shanks clamp on to the 3-bar frame. A total of 19 shanks provide 8-in. row spacings which Jones finds adequate for seeding into either range or no-

till grain fields.

“Eight-inch row spacings leave room for the trash to move around the shanks without plugging,” he says. “For rough pasture only, I would go with a 12-in. spacing, because range rejuvenation doesn’t need narrow rows, and there is often more trash.”

To control trash, Jones grazes range really hard in the fall and again in the spring before seeding. Alfalfa fields have been rejuvenated by haying them off, spraying with a burn down and then seeding alfalfa with his sod seeder. He has also seeded fall rye and sorghum into hay fields that had been taken over by June grass and had no legumes left. So far, the drill has done everything Jones has asked of it.

“The openers cut a vertical line into the ground with a horizontal line at the seeding depth, sort of like an upside down T that cuts and lifts the sod to cover the seed,” he explains. “The vertical line stays open, so the seed can easily penetrate up and out of the slot, yet it is well down in the moisture level.”

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3-Pt. Mounted “Manlift”

“It’s very stable and works great for a variety of jobs,” says Patrick Prom, Eden Prairie, Minn., about his home-built “manlift” for tractor 3-pt. It lets him work from a 4-ft. wide metal basket that’s raised or lowered by a hand-operated winch. The basket can be raised up to 15 ft. high.

The manlift is designed to fit the Cat. 1 3-pt. hitch on Prom’s Deere 870 28 hp tractor. The basket is equipped with bearings, mounted inside brackets, that ride along a pair of frame rails spaced as far apart as the 3-pt.’s lower lift arms. The frame rails are made from 2 by 3-in. steel tubing. Rungs made from 1-in. dia. pipe are spaced 2 ft. apart between the rails, forming a ladder.

To use the manlift, Prom lowers the 3-pt. until both rails rest on the ground, then gets in the basket and uses the winch to crank it up.

“I’ve used it for putting gutters on my house, trimming trees with a pole trimmer, installing Christmas lights, and many other jobs,” says Prom. “It works a lot better than a ladder because I work from a 4 by 2-ft. platform and therefore don’t have to move as often. I use the 3-pt.’s top link to adjust the upward angle of the rails. I used the hand-operated winch because I didn’t want to buy an electric winch. It takes a while to crank



“It works great for trimming trees and for many other jobs,” says Pat Prom about his home-built, 3-pt. mounted “manlift”.

the platform all the way up and down.”

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