

## Deere Garden Tractor Fitted With Rubber Tracks

Adding tracks to a Deere 140H3 garden tractor gave Todd Poach enough power to pull his father's 5,300-lb. Deere 60 tractor around the farm, even if his dad set the brakes.

"I got the idea after seeing a Cub Cadet fitted with tracks," says Poach.

After a long time spent thinking it through, he began by slicing a track from a Deere 400 snowmobile in half lengthwise using a die grinder that sealed the edges of the pads as it ground.

"A saw would have left raw edges," points out Poach. "I also used a grinder to take off the ridge along the outside edge of the track."

With tracks in hand, he began to build a set of rear drive wheels to fit the 140H3 transaxle. It took a lot of calculating to get the wheel diameters just right to fit the cogs. While the original wheels were about the right width for the tracks, they needed more height and needed to match the drive pegs on the track exactly.

"I cut out circles of 1/4-in. steel plate and welded them to the rims," recalls Poach. "Then I cut two strips of 1/8-in. steel and rolled them to fit inside each rim. They provide a surface for the track to ride on."

After doing the same for the front wheels, Poach cut pieces of metal and welded across the drive wheels to create square holes for

the track pegs. After finishing the wheels, he built a subframe out of 1 1/2-in. steel tubing. Guide wheels were salvaged off a junked snowmobile and mounted to the subframe along with the drive and front wheels.

The next step was to strip off the front axle, brake pedals, steering wheel and the center rock shaft meant to lift and lower the deck mower. Any holes were welded over and an hour meter was installed where the steering column had been. By the time he finished, it looked like the missing parts had never been there.

The 140H3, with its variable speed hydrostatic drive and a single lever controlling forward and reverse, was ideal for conversion to tracks. Individual rear brakes on the rear axle were converted to hand levers to steer the track unit.

Of course, once he thought he was finished, he discovered he wasn't. The track drive system that had taken him a month and a half to figure out was eating up track pegs. He realized he needed to tear them apart and grind down the edges of the cross bars that created the holes for the pegs.

"Figuring out the drive wheels was the most complicated part of the conversion," says Poach. "I have more than 60 pieces of steel in each drive wheel."



Todd Poach added tracks to his Deere garden tractor by slicing a track from a Deere snowmobile in half lengthwise and building a custom track system.

Aside from pulling his dad's Deere 60, Poach hasn't actually done much work with his 140H3 crawler. He had intended to use it with a blade to push snow.

"I built a blade for it to run off the two hydraulic outlets on the front of the tractor, but once I had it sandblasted and painted, I hated to actually use it," he explains.

Poach says he might be willing to help others build one, with plans or even building one to order. As Poach works a swing shift, it would be best to contact him by email or regular mail.

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Durable woven mesh blanket eliminates the need for tires when covering a bunker silo. Unlike plastic, the wind doesn't lift it up.

## Weighted Covers Protect Bunker Silos Without Tires

No tires are needed for covering a bunker silo with the new Secure Cover. Lay down the plastic sheet, but instead of covering it with tires, roll out the durable woven mesh blanket.

"When wind goes over a plastic covered silage pile, it lifts the plastic the way an airplane wing lifts," explains Jim Kautz, Bag Man LLC, U.S. distributor for Secure Cover. "In England where it was developed, the Secure Cover is used over landfills to capture methane gas. It breaks 70 to 80 mph gusts coming off the North Atlantic."

The Secure Cover mesh is made from virgin high-density polyethylene. Guaranteed against UV breakdown for seven years, Kautz expects it is recyclable when it does need to be replaced.

Meanwhile, it's the tires that can be recycled, suggests Kautz. "The Secure Cover eliminates all the problems that come with tires, from mosquitoes in the summer to wire in the feed when one goes through the TMR," he says. "It also takes a lot less labor."

Secure Covers come in 26-ft. widths at a variety of lengths. Kautz prices it at 32¢/square ft. For wider piles, two or more widths can be laid side by side and tied together with zip ties. To hold them down on the edges, 3-ft. 8-in. diameter bags can be filled with gravel, zip tied shut and laid end to end.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bag Man LLC, P.O. Box 162, Hammond, Wis. 54015 (ph 715 796-5333 or toll free 800 796-5333; www.afsbgan.com).



Kevin Holst's auger system is designed to clear corn out of his 18,000-bu. pile, which is contained inside a 60-ft. dia. temporary storage bin.

## Auger Empties Temporary Storage

Temporary corn storage in an outside pile can be a pain to empty. Using a loader means breaking open the retaining wall, and vac systems can get torn up accidentally by rocks. This past winter, Kevin Holst made an auger system to clear the corn out of his 18,000-bu. pile.

"It's always easier filling these temporary storage areas than emptying them out," he says. "I figured if an auger could fill it, why not use an auger to empty it."

The key was getting the auger in place before the corn. His first step was to cut down a 55-ft. auger to 34 ft. He then cut a hole in the side of the double high set of rings used as the retaining wall and ran the auger to the center of the 60-ft. dia. bin.

A standard grain sump attached to the end of the auger would empty out most of the grain. To speed the process, Holst also cut several holes in the auger sleeve to serve as intermediate sumps. He covered the holes with sliding doors that could be opened and closed with pull-rods from outside the bin.

To draw corn out of the bin, the auger had to be reversed. Holst mounted a jackshaft and sprockets to the pto gearbox.

For the most part, the auger worked the way Holst had hoped. "The intermediate sumps didn't remove much corn, but they did make it easier to get in and out of the bin at that point," says Holst. "Even the main sump didn't draw corn for more than about three hours. I hooked a 10-ft. sweep auger on a



He cut a hole in the side of rings used as retaining walls, running the auger to the center of bin.

pivot post at the main sump."

Once the center 10 ft. had been cleared, a second and finally a third sweep auger section were added. All but 8 ft. of corn on either side of the auger were removed by the sweeps.

"We had to shovel the grain away from the main auger, but it was still better than the alternatives," says Holst.

One other addition he made to the auger worked even better. That was an aeration tube with a 14-in. axial fan pulling air out of the corn pile.

"I had a tarp over the pile and with the aeration tube and fan, it sucked the tarp down tight over the corn," says Holst. "I only ran it on windy days, but when I did, that tarp wasn't going anywhere."

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