Battery-powered electric winch provides lift on the 3-pt. hitch chassis.

3-Pt. Hitch Chassis Lets Lawn Mower Pull Disk And Ripper

Customized accessories crafted for a garden tractor save labor and time in gardens and orchards.

Maurice Leighton put this principle into practice by building a "3-pt. hitch chassis" which, when pulled behind his Wheelhorse tractor, allows him to hook up to either a home-built ripper, or a 3 1/2-ft. commercial disk, adapted to a 3-pt. hitch.

Essentially, the 2-wheeled chassis that follows the little tractor, provides an optional 3-pt. hitch when needed. It's made with scrap iron, salvaged tires, and discarded plywood. To raise and lower the ripper or disc, Leighton installed a 2,000-lb. winch with a 3/16-in. flexible cable, on the chassis. A 12 1/2-volt deep cell battery powers it. The winch's electrical switch control is portable so it can be placed on the tractor.

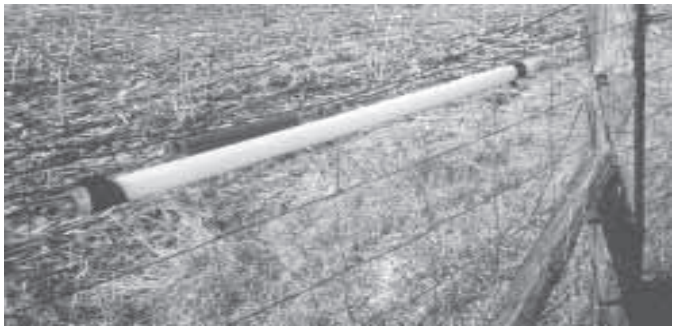
The Placerville, Calif. man made his ripper with metal parts from an old 5th wheel hitch, and purchased harrow teeth to bolt onto hand-crafted extended shanks.

Leighton mounts a variety of tools on tow-behind 3-pt. hitch.

For deeper penetration with either the disk or the ripper, he adds cement and iron weights.

"To do heavy pulling like this, it's best to have a garden tractor with a gearshift," he explains. "Mine is a 15-hp, 8-speed gear shift Wheelhorse. I put tractor treads on the back wheels for traction. The mower deck should also be removable for projects that will be over lumpy ground."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Maurice R. Leighton, 6560 Lindberg Ave., Placerville, Calif. 95667 (ph 530 626-0965).



Ralph Stover wires fluorescent bulbs to his electric fence wire so he can look out a window to see if the light is flashing.

Fluorescent Bulbs Show Electric Fence Is Working

Ralph Stover doesn't need to go outside to check if his electric fence is working. He looks out a window to see if the fluorescent light on his fence line is flashing.

For about 25 years the Mulligan, Mich., horse owner has wired fluorescent bulbs to his electric fence wire, crimping the wire to one contact at each side of the bulb. The bulb is duct taped to the fence up against a wire.

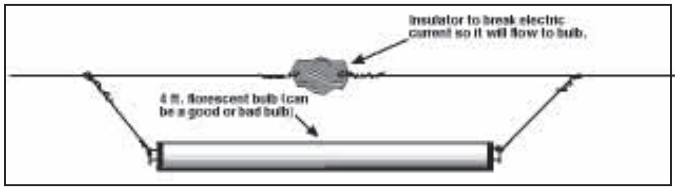
"The current goes through the light bulb. You can see it flash," Stover says. "You can use lights on all sides. I put a light on the end of the fence so I can see if electricity is making it all the way around."

He recycles 4-ft. bulbs that are almost burned out. They last many years he says. Any size works.

Through the years he has kept a variety of horses inside a woven wire fence with a strand of electric fence to keep the horses from scratching the fence.

"It works good and doesn't cost anything to do," Stover says. If he doesn't see the light flashing he knows he better check the fence. He adds that it's also helpful to steer deer away from jumping and breaking the fence.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ralph Stover, 13465 Gates Rd., Mulligan, Mich. 48861 (ph 517 649-8546).



"Water Tower" Hooks Up To Garden Hose

"It saves money because the water is free and no electricity is required to operate a pump. Gravity does it all," says Tom Chaney, Sr., about the garden "water tower" he built by welding together two 55-gal. barrels. He uses the tower to water his garden and also provide water to an engine-powered pressure washer.

The tower stands 12 ft. high on a wooden stand and concrete pad. It holds 110 gal. of water. A rain gutter that extends 5 ft. out from a pole shed is used to fill it. An upside-down faucet and nipple valve at the bottom allows hookup to a 250-ft. long garden hose. Chaney connects a 50-ft. long perforated "soaker hose" to the garden hose and uses it to water his garden.

To make the tank, he cut out both ends of one barrel and the bottom of the other, then turned it upside down and welded the two barrels together. He screwed a valve into the bunge hole at the bottom and attached a faucet upside down to it.

A ladder mounted on one side of the tower provides access.

"I built it because I raise a good size garden and wanted to lower my electricity bill," says Chaney. "I also use it to supply a gas engine-powered pressure washer that I use to clean my trucks."

He already had the barrels and used lumber from an old barn to build the stand. "My only cost was $6 for the valve and $8 for the faucet. I plan to add a third barrel which will increase the tower's capacity to 165 gallons," he notes.

Garden "water tower" eliminates the need for a pump. It was built by welding together two 55-gal. barrels.

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Old Seatbelts Make Great Gate Latch

Keith Kropf keeps the gates on his Newaygo, Mich., farm closed tight with old seatbelts.

He unbolts both sides of seatbelts from junk cars and trucks. He wraps the belt around the post next to the gate, adjusts it to length and lag bolts or staples the metal ends, one on top of the other, to the post. For a steel post, drill a hole for a bolt and wrap the belt as many times as needed for the right length. The seatbelt buckle ends meet and close around the gate.

"Best of all the belts are free for the taking. They work great and last for years," says Kropf, who uses the belts to safely secure his beefalo herd in fenced lots. One tattered strap wore out after eight years, but the chrome plated or plastic buckles hold up well in all kinds of weather, including ice.

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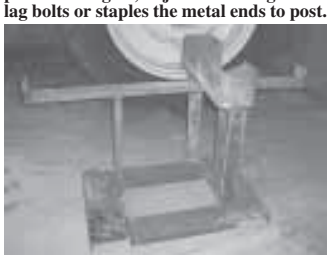
Keith Kropf wraps old seatbelt around post next to gate, adjusts it to length and lag bolts or staples the metal ends to post.



Middle part of rack holds front suitcase weights, while tractor's rear wheel weights go on each end of a 4-ft. long horizontal bar with vertical steel tabs welded onto each end.

Handy Tractor Weight Storage Bracket

"I made a handy tractor weight storage system out of scrap iron and the front weight bracket for an old IH 560 tractor," says Carl Walter, Spring Valley, Ill.

The middle part of the weight rack is used to hold the front suitcase weights from Walter's Deere 8120 tractor. The tractor's rear wheel weights go on each end of a 4-ft. long horizontal bar with vertical steel tabs welded onto each end. "A pair of channel irons built into the base of the unit lets me move the setup around the shop with my forklift. I slide the rear weights onto the forklift tines and then just slide them off onto each end of the bar," says Walter.

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