



"I use it to clean out our 48-in. wide baby calf stalls," says Daniel Perkins, who built this front-end loader from scratch for his Massey Ferguson 1650 garden tractor.

Scratch-Built Loader Looks Factory-Built

Daniel Perkins' Massey Ferguson garden tractor front-end loader looks like it came from the factory, but he actually built it out of scrap steel. The loader looked good enough that it was recently featured as tractor of the month on www.gardentractortalk.com and in *Lawn and Garden Tractor* magazine (www.lagtmag.com).

"I built it from scratch to go on my Massey 1650 garden tractor," says Perkins. "I didn't have any plans or do it to scale. I just started cutting, and if it looked right, I put it together."

He says a local steel yard had seconds and cutoffs at the time for just 15¢ a pound. He bought about 300 lbs. for only \$45. Fittings and two tilt cylinders were purchased new,

and the hoses were obtained on eBay.

The loader wasn't built for show, although Perkins has taken it to a few. He built it for cleaning out 48-in. wide baby calf stalls. The 41-in. wide bucket and manure forks leave play to either side in the stalls. The bucket takes a good bite with its 17-in. height and 20-in. depth. The fork set he built for it is 23 in. long.

"The 2 1/4-in. dia. lift cylinders are off a New Idea hay roller," says Perkins. "I cut the body and the ram down to size. I started with a single bucket tilt cylinder, but changed to two for more tilt power."

The bucket was built from 3/16-in. plate, while the loader mount and frame are 1/4-in., 2 by 4-in. steel tubing.



Loader's 2 1/4-in. dia. lift cylinders came off a New Idea hay baler.

loader tractor".

"Holes connect the bottom and sides of the frame so they can act as oil reservoirs for the hydraulic pump," explains Perkins. "The pump is off a Case 446 garden tractor and runs off the front of the Massey engine. The hydraulic lever set is the original equipment off the MF 1650."

A hydraulic filter mounts on the right side of the loader on the return oil line. Air bleeders are mounted at the top of the mount uprights.

Since first building the loader in 2005, Perkins has switched it to a MF 1655 that he repowered with an 18 hp B48G Onan engine. All he had to do for the repower was change the pulley to the pto crankshaft. Perkins describes the 1655 as "a perfect dedicated

Perkins also added quick-tach connectors to the loader, bucket and manure forks. "It's a very quick job of maybe 20 to 30 sec. to swap them out," he says.

The tractor loader gets plenty of work around Perkins' farm aside from cleaning calf stalls. He has used it to move dirt, remove broken concrete and even create a diversion ditch for installing drain tile.

"The loader can easily lift 600 lbs.," says Perkins. "It's a real workhorse around the farm, and it only cost \$605 to build."

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He Built His Tractor From The Inside Out

Richard Kast built his tractor from the inside out by selecting the engine and transmission he wanted to use and building around them. The result was a great looking tractor that only suffers from being too fast.

"I geared it down 3:1, but I think I should have gone even farther," says Kast. "It has a top speed of about 50 mph, and when I hit the throttle, it will spin the tires until I back off."

Kast built his tractor around a 4.3L engine from a 1987 GMC pickup. It easily bolted to a 4-speed (with pto) transmission from a 1957 Chevy pickup. The front and rear ends came from a 1956 Ford pickup.

"I put the motor and transmission on jack stands and then used steel tubing to build the frame around it," he recalls. "I mocked up everything on the floor and then changed things as I needed."

Changes included narrowing the front and rear ends. He also installed a cab from an old compact Deere tractor.

"Once I had the cab in place, it was easy to fabricate a floor and fenders around it," says

Kast.

Needing to gear down the transmission, he ran a short driveshaft stub to a pillow block and put a #60 sprocket on its end. A drive belt to a pulley that he put on the driveshaft flange on the rear end gave him a 3:1 gear ratio.

A tendency to spin out is the biggest problem he has when using the tractor for snowblowing, the tractor's primary purpose.

Kast got a hydraulically-driven snowblower off a Bobcat and built loader arms out of steel tubing. "The snowblower was pretty worn out," he recalls. "I replaced bearings and fixed bent fan vanes and a bent auger."

Kast built a 15-gal. hydraulic reservoir out of an old air tank from a semi tractor. He cut one end off, cleaned it out, sealed it back up and then hung it on the back end of the tractor. He bought two new lift cylinders for the loader and used steel tubing to make new loader arms. Finally, he bought a 22 gal./min. pump on eBay to power everything.

"I connected the pump to a crankshaft stub at the front of the engine with a sprocket chain and a jackshaft," says Kast. "The pump works



Richard Kast built his loader tractor around a 4.3-liter engine from a 1987 GM pickup and a 4-speed transmission from a 1957 Chevy pickup.

great and really lifts the arms fast."

With everything in place, Kast decided to cover it with a hood and cowl similar to his dad's M. A friend gave him an old M hood that was pretty well beat up. Kast straightened it out and cleaned it up.

"I cut about 4 to 6 in. off the bottom and attached it so it tilts to the front for access,"

says Kast. "I put chains on the tractor in the winter and a 30-gal. barrel of sand on the back end. I still have a traction problem and may have to gear it down more yet."

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Revolutionary Hand-Held Gas-Powered Post Driver

The world's first hand-held gas-powered post driver eliminates the hoses needed for hydraulic or air-powered drivers. Its hammer action is powered by a Honda GX35 engine, a four-stroke, air-cooled engine that can operate "any side up". The engine has a dry weight of less than 8 lbs., and the entire driver weighs only 32 lbs.

"This makes it a lot easier to build fence on hard, rocky ground or rough hilly terrain," says Rory Evans, Redi Driver. "It delivers 28 blows per second, equal to a pneumatic driver. It's more affordable and efficient, too. It burns less than a gallon of gas to drive in 400 to 500 posts."

Evans says the unit is able to handle a variety of fence posts up to 1 5/8 in. in dia. Adapters are available for posts up to 2 3/8

in. as well as for smaller grounding rods.

It's the unique engine that makes many of the features of the driver possible. It can operate at any angle (even upside down), so posts can be driven at any angle. It can also be set or stored at any angle without concern. The mini four-stroke measures only 8 by 9.2 by 9.4 in. in size, but delivers more than a pound of torque at 5,500 rpm's.

The driver mechanism itself was developed by Christie Engineering, Sydney, Australia. The hammering action is isolated from the user by spring-cushioned handles, which helps limit fatigue. The cast aluminum body, constructed with fasteners, promises long life, as do the sealed bearings in the internal rotating hammer mechanism.

"We've been in the fencing business for

30 years, and when we tried this product, we knew we had a winner," says Evans. "It's perfect for anyone who does a lot of fencing or who installs a lot of sign posts, stakes, grounding rods, T-posts and more."

The Redi Driver is available direct from the sole distributor in the U.S. and Canada. It is priced at \$1,959 with free shipping in the continental U.S. and a slight charge in Canada.

You can see the Redi Driver in action at www.farmshow.com.

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Hammer action on this handheld post driver is provided by a Honda GX35 gas engine, eliminating the hoses needed for hydraulic or air-powered drivers.