



Instead of the 200+ hp Cummins engine common to full-size Versatile tractors, Ted Huber's articulated Versatile 824 is powered by a 24 hp Yanmar.



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Scaled Down Versatile Looks Factory-Built

Ted Huber's articulating 824 Versatile only lacks the horsepower of its namesake big brothers. The half-scale tractor is powered by a 24 hp Yanmar instead of the 200+ hp Cummins common to full-size Versatiles.

"I built a couple of tractors 30 years ago or so and decided to do another one," says Huber. "I had my eye on a few I would see at shows and decided to do a Versatile articulated tractor. I called it an 824 because of the 24 hp. engine I used."

First featured in *Lawn & Garden Tractor* magazine (www.lagtmag.com), the 4-WD tractor is complete with fully functioning (if downsized) hydraulics and 3-pt. hitch.

He started with a sketch and some specifications out of old Versatile brochures. He also tapped into a lot of salvaged materials and work experience. In addition to farming, Huber spent much of his life fabricating equipment for companies. He made parts and systems for everything from pile driving cranes to asphalt and concrete equipment and more. Along the way he got comfortable making sketches to explain to engineers where

their plans needed changes.

Parts included rear ends from 2 Case garden tractors and 2 by 2-in. 1/4-in. thick tubing salvaged from an asphalt paver. The tubing extended the frame on the front axle to mount the engine. He also used it with ball sockets (also salvaged from asphalt paver rebuilds) to fabricate the isolating and articulating joint with hydraulic cylinder for steering. The steering system was salvaged from a golf course mower and the steering pump from a Case tractor.

Huber estimated engine and radiator placement and the width of the hood and wheelbase, sketching things out as he went. The grill was made from 3 lawn tractor grills, cut up and reassembled to size.

The hydraulic system with pump and a tank repurposed from a Kohler engine gas tank were mounted on one side of the front axle/drive unit. The diesel fuel tank, battery and wiring harness were mounted to the other side.

The hydrostatic drives were set up with a control valve for forward and reverse. When

he shifts, oil is drawn through one axle to the other. It returns to the valve through an oil cooler and filter to the tank.

"When I took it out for a drive after setting it all up, it would surge," says Huber. "When I looked in the reservoir, the oil was real foamy. I realized there were baffles in the tank that slowed the returning oil. Once I removed them, it cured the surge."

Huber fabricated dummy outdoor planetary hubs complete with bolts to simulate the original Versatile design. He even drilled and plugged holes to match the oil level checks found on Versatile hubs. A second set of wheels, with centers removed for use as duals, were mounted with spacers to the drive wheels.

Huber mounted a working 3-pt. hitch from a Massey Ferguson and hydraulic outlets on the rear. The tractor dash is complete with working transmission pressure gauge, traction pressure gauge, switches to shift in and out for high and low range, a lever for the 3-pt. and valves for hydraulics.

Huber topped the wheels off with front

fenders from an Ingersoll garden tractor and rear fenders from a Case.

One of the last additions was one of the few that required new parts. "The wheels all had knobby tires on them," says Huber. "I waited till everything was in place and working before investing in agricultural tires. I ordered 8 of them with inner tubes from Taylor Tire out of Litchfield, Ill."

When he was all done, the scale model was 9 1/2 ft. long and 5 1/2 ft. wide with a 50-in. wheelbase. It weighs in at 1,900 lbs. and is painted with New Holland red and Cat yellow and black.

Huber is now working on a winged John Deere disk to go with the Versatile. It will operate with hydraulic controls on the tractor. Once complete, it will join the tractor as Huber drives it in parades and takes it to shows.

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Rare Ohio-Built Tractor Still Runs Great

Jim Goodwin didn't realize how rare his Brockway G49 tractor was until he was offered 25 times what he paid for it. Fewer than 500 of the tractors were made in Auburn, Ohio, between 1949 and 1959, with about half of them going to Europe. Goodwin's ended up at an Ohio golf course.

"I bought it from a man for \$1,000 who got it from the golf course for free," says Goodwin. "He wanted to buy a backhoe from the golf course and offered them \$3,000. They told him it was a deal if he took the old tractor, too."

Goodwin tore the tractor down to the frame and put it back together one piece at a time. He recalls the brake housing being messed up, and there was a leaky seal on a pulley on the main shaft.

Needing parts, he contacted Al Brockway, grandson of the founder. Brockway and his wife Pat still live near the family factory that closed in 1959.

Brockway has 6 tractors that were made under the family brand names. According to an article by Sam Moore in *Farm and Dairy* magazine in 2012, the first tractors built by the Brockways were called American Garden Tractors, small 4-wheeled tractors using a Chevy 4-cylinder engine and transmission. In 1940, they formed the Leader Tractor Co., making a larger and heavier machine, initially powered by a Chevy 4-cylinder, later by a 6-cylinder Chrysler and still later by a

Hercules IXB 4-cylinder flat-head engine.

"Leaders were made by the thousands between 1944 and 1948, leaving the factory in groups of 8 on car carriers," says Al Brockway, now 82. He recalls his father having to accompany a shipment of 12 to Mexico so he could teach the operators how to drive the tractors.

"I had an early Leader model that was built in 1942 and still have one of the last ones made in 1948," says Brockway. "I also have 3 Brockways, including one of the last of them. My dad used it for years to mow his multi-acre lawn."

Only 12 of the 1942 models were made, and Brockway knows of 4 that still exist. He sold his to friend and fellow Brockway family tractor collector, Lynn Hosmer, Burton, Ohio.

"I traded a case of beer for my first Leader in the early 1980's," recalls Hosmer, who collects Ohio-made tractors. He has known Brockway for 44 years and prizes his long friendship.

In 1949, a hostile takeover ended with the loss of the Leader tractor name and the closing of the factory. Brockway's father and grandfather quickly relocated and started building the G49 Brockway tractor, a heavier version of the Leader. It was available with a 42.8 hp Continental F-162 gas engine or a 30.6 hp Continental GD-157 diesel. Over the years they were painted various colors.

"Al Brockway told me they once got 200



Fewer than 500 Brockway G49 tractors were built, between 1949 and 1959. Jim Goodwin didn't realize how rare his model was until he was offered 25 times what he paid for it.

gal. of school bus yellow paint, so for 2 years the tractors were all painted yellow," recalls Goodwin.

He says the Brockways were ahead of their time. "They had a working 3-pt. hitch, headlights, 4 speeds forward and reverse, and a road speed of 15 mph," says Goodwin. "They offered apto shaft with a small belt pulley to the side."

He describes his Brockway as a smooth runner that starts easy. He enjoys taking it

to tractor shows and pulling veterans' floats in parades. He has seen few others in good shape, which may be why another vintage tractor collector recently approached him.

"He offered me \$25,000," says Goodwin. "I have about \$3,000 in it, but it's not for sale."

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