

Tractor-Powered Picnic Table

The Minneapolis Moline-powered picnic table is one of the most popular attractions at The Prairie Gold Rush MM Show in Shelbina, Mo. (Sept. 17-20, 2015).

Clint Youse, one of the show's organizers, came up with the idea about 5 years ago.

"We wanted to have something to ride around shows on and have a conversation piece," he explains.

He started with a 1952 MM ZA tractor and bolted on a channel iron frame using the tractor's cultivator mount holes. He used the front end off a parts tractor to support the end of the frame, which holds a picnic table with a metal frame and wood seats and top. He extended the steering shaft to the front end with a rod and bearing holders, and took the front tires off the tractor and mounted them on the extended wheels.



Clint Youse mounted a picnic table on front of a 1952 MM ZA tractor. "We wanted to have something to ride around shows and have a conversation piece," he says.

"We widened the back wheels out for better stability," Youse adds.

The table holds about eight people and catches visitors' attention at the show. While he occasionally uses it for private rides, Youse says it's not used for rides for the public due to liability issues.

It was an easy modification, he says, and the picnic table front end can be removed to

restore the tractor back to its original condition.

People are invited to check it out at the show in September.

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Loader And Backhoe Built For Deere 318 Garden Tractor

Jake Tolstedt says he located and saved various parts for his home-built loader and mini backhoe for years before he finally started building his self-designed rig. "I found a used Johnson loader that had been on a Montgomery Ward's lawn tractor and fit it onto my Deere 318 tractor," Tolstedt says. "About that time I saw lawn tractor backhoe plans from PF Engineering in FARM SHOW, so I ordered them and went to work."

Tolstedt then decided to make his backhoe and loader setup into a smaller version of a Deere industrial backhoe. He's familiar with those designs through his work as a diesel technician for Murphy Tractor, a Deere industrial dealer in North Platte, Neb. Using that background knowledge he configured a custom sub frame made of 2-in. square tubing for his tractor. It's bolted to the bottom of the axle and the frame to equalize the weight of the tools. The loader and backhoe add about 1,100 lbs. to the weight of his tractor, but the reinforced frame provides ample support. He says the added weight of the backhoe makes the loader a lot more useful.

Tolstedt built a reinforced loader frame with 2-in. square tubing. The loader can lift up to 600 lbs. about 56 in. high. He has a 48-in. bucket and a 36-in. pallet fork that are easy to change with the quick coupler mounting that he built.

The backhoe boom is made from 3 1/2-in. square by 1/4-in. thick wall tubing. The arm is made from 3-in. tubing with a 3/16-in. wall. He bought 2 backhoe buckets with large digging teeth from Deere to fit

the quick coupler he made for the boom arm. One is 10 in. and the other 16 in. wide. He also made a manually adjustable thumb that helps to pick up brush and other rough material. The backhoe raises and lowers with a 2 1/2-in. cylinder. The bucket and outriggers operate with 2-in. cylinders. The boom arm reaches 8 ft., digs 5 1/2 ft. deep and can lift about 200 lbs. 8 1/2 ft. high. The pivot pin for the backhoe is from a large loader bucket link.

Tolstedt built a custom hydraulic system to run both tools. It includes an auxiliary pump driven off the front of the engine by the same belt that used to drive the belly lawn mower on the 318. The pump feeds the backhoe valve first and then the loader valve, then returns to the reservoir under the back of the tractor. He used the salvaged 318 valve on the loader so the boom had float for back dragging.

Tolstedt says "One of the most difficult parts of the whole project was the seat swivel. I had a hard time finding a mechanism that looked right and worked in the tight space. The seat swivel I ended up using is from a utility tractor that had a mounted backhoe."

Tolstedt says the project took him much longer to complete than he originally planned. "Initially I was aiming for 12 to 16 months, but it ended up taking closer to 3 years. For the sake of maintaining my marriage, I won't guess at the cost, but it's still way less



Jake Tolstedt's garden tractor loader and backhoe looks factory made, but he built it himself over a 3-year period.

than buying a new rig like this. A lot of the parts I made, and some came from friends or junk piles. Most of them I got for little or nothing."

The shiny industrial yellow and construction charcoal paint job gives the completed equipment a "factory made" appearance.

Tolstedt says the loader and backhoe are real handy around his yard. He's used the machine to move brush, transplant trees and dig drainage ditches. He plans to put in about 300 ft. of water line and electrical cable and says it shouldn't have any trouble with that project. His 9-yr.-old son Bill is very adept at working the backhoe controls. "He saw me work on this for a long time and even helped me build on it toward the end, so it's great to have him take an interest in using it."

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