

Splitter Mounts On Compact Tractor

With its new bolt-on pto kit, Split-Fire makes it possible to split wood with tractors as small as 18 hp.

"Customers wanted to use compact tractors as their power source when splitting, but many of these tractors do not have an adequate hydraulic system," says Kyle Kirktown, sales manager.

Split-Fire's bolt-on kit is compatible with its entire line of 3-pt. hitch models. The most popular is the 3203, rated at 20-ton splitting force. The kit and splitter costs about \$2,600 (U.S.).

The Norwich, Ont., company has been manufacturing wood splitters since 1984, with a 2-way split design. The innovative "V" shaped log "stops" force wood to fold

around them, relieving pressure. Split-Fire is also known for its low frictionless slider system with Ultra-High-Molecular-Weight polyethylene slide pads that resist abrasion and prevent wear.

In addition to 3-point hitch models, Split-Fire offers a range of self-contained and skidsteer splitters. They even have splitters that mount on backhoes.

Split-Fire offers a no-questions-asked full 1-year warranty and has distributors in Canada and the U.S.

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Split-Fire's new bolt-on pto kit makes it possible to split wood with tractors that don't have an adequate hydraulic system.

Log Splitter Mounts On Front Of Tractor

Gary Gradek, Ukiah, Calif., can split logs without tying up the back of his tractor, thanks to the front-mounted splitter he built for it.

The splitter attaches to a 3-pt. mounting bracket that bolts onto the tractor's frame and operates off the loader's hydraulics. It's built on an 8 by 6-in. I-beam that folds up vertically out of the way when not in use.

"I use it on my Ford New Holland 4630 4-WD 60 hp. tractor with a 3-pt. mounted, 9-in. Valby wood chipper on back," says Gradek. "I go into the woods and back up to a felled tree to grind up the limbs. Then I cut it into chunks and use the splitter to make firewood. It can split up to 24-in. long wood. The end of the splitter beam can rest on a log chunk for support, or I can lay the beam on the ground if the log is really heavy."

When folded vertically, the splitter locks in place at the top of the 3-pt. hitch. "It weighs about the same as the tractor's factory counterweights so I can leave the splitter on

the tractor permanently," says Gradek. "After working in the woods I can replace the wood chipper with a rototiller and till our garden, and then go back and split wood again."

A 2-in. hydraulic cylinder is used to raise or lower the I-beam, and a diverter valve is used to activate the splitting cylinder. "The entire unit has just 2 hydraulic lines that connect to the tractor's rear ports," says Gradek.

The splitter is equipped with 2 removable wedges. "One is a standard wedge for halving larger logs, and the other is a 4-way wedge for quartering smaller logs," says Gradek. "The top of the 4-way wedge has serrations ground into the knife, in order to keep the wood from sliding up when I only want to split it in half."

Gradek says he spent about \$400 to build the splitter.

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Front-mounted splitter is built on an 8 by 6-in. I-beam that folds up vertically out of the way when not in use.

Log Splitter Built To Last

"I think it's the last log splitter I'll ever need," says James Queen, whose splitter is equipped with a hydraulic-operated log lifter, 23 hp. Kohler 2-cyl. engine, 28 gpm pump, and 20-gal. hydraulic tank. All moving parts have grease fittings.

"It's really handy and built so strong that it'll never twist or bend," says Queen. "It took 2 mos. working part time to build it, using 25 lbs. of stick welding rod. It has electric start, a pressure gauge, and all the bells and whistles."

Finished with black, yellow and gray paint, the trailer-mounted splitter looks more like a factory-built model than a made-it-myself project. It started with the axle and 15-in. wheels off a Saturn car. Queen flipped the axle upside down in order to achieve a 32-in. working height, then welded an I-beam with 1-in. thick top, bottom and sides onto the table frame. Spacers made from 2-in. square tubing mount under the beam.

The splitter can be pulled with a pintle hitch or ball hitch. "I welded a 2-in. dia. steel tube on front of the splitter frame. The hitch slides inside the tube and pins onto it," says Queen.

The splitter's 28 gpm hydraulic pump operates a 4-in. dia., 24-in. splitting cylinder with a 5-sec. cycle time. The wedge was made from 2 wood chipper blades that were too small to use on a chipper. Queen ground a 3/4-in. thick steel plate down at a 45 degree angle, then welded the blades onto it to form a "V", and added bracing.

The machine's log lifter is made from the expanded metal screen off a topsoil shredder. "The arm is raised or lowered by a 1 1/4



"It's built so strong that it'll never twist or bend," says James Queen about his hydraulic-operated log splitter. He can quickly set up a 10-ft. umbrella over it.

in. thick cylinder and will lift 1,000 lbs.," says Queen. "I welded a 1-in. dia. steel rod diagonally on back of the arm to keep logs from accidentally catching on the fender."

The splitter's frame is made from 1/4-in. thick, 2-in. square tubing. Queen used 3/4-in. thick steel plate to build the cylinder head.

He can quickly set up a 10-ft. picnic table umbrella on the tall square metal tube that supports the splitter's control panel. A red and white ICC bumper, with white DOT tape, mounts on back of the splitter.

The splitter's front tongue jack is off of a travel trailer. "With 75 lbs. of tongue weight,

Ditch Witch "Outrigger" Log Splitter

"Last summer we had almost 18 in. of rain in 2 1/2 days, which washed out a bridge and a bunch of trees near my home. I had previously built a backhoe for my 6510 Ditch Witch and, since I now needed a good wood splitter, I got the idea of using one of the outriggers as a splitter," says Ray Horan, Ashland, Penn.

"The hoses were long enough to turn the 12-in. long, 3-in. dia. cylinder upside down. I made a heavy mounting frame on the side of the backhoe frame to hold the cylinder and used the outrigger frame to make the base of the splitter. Two long bolts tie the two together. I welded a hook on the base so I can use a chain to lift it up when I need to use the outrigger."

"I put a large piece of hardwood on the base as a backstop for the cylinder, and made a big splitting wedge to fit the cylinder."

"I didn't know if the 3-in. cylinder would be big enough but, after about 5 cords of wood, I haven't found anything it won't split. A neighbor brings over big pieces of knotty oak and it goes through them like butter."

"The cycle time is about 7 seconds and the



When Ray Horan needed a log splitter, he decided to convert one of the "outriggers" on his Ditch Witch.

existing hydraulic lever is right there where it's easy to reach."

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I can move the splitter by hand if I have to," says Queen.

He already had the engine, both cylinders, and most of the steel but bought the I-beam, hydraulic tank, axle, valve bodies, pump, and filter assembly - all new - from a friend. He also bought new hoses and fittings.

"All in all, I have about \$800 invested in

the splitter. My friends say it looks too nice to use, and my wife says that with the umbrella up it looks like an ice cream vending cart," says Queen.

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