



Dave Wilson buys and restores junked International Harvester Cubs to like-new condition.

**FARM SHOW**



## Self-Taught Restorer Makes Old Cubs Shine

Dave Wilson makes old Cub Cadets look like new. He only works with the original models sold from 1947 to 1953, cleaning them up and quickly selling them along with one or more implements. He lists them on Craigslist and on Facebook under the Farmall Cub Rebuilders Group.

"I restore them completely, tearing each one apart and then rebuilding from the front to the back, a piece at a time," says Wilson. "The longest I've held on to one after restoring it is 2 weeks."

Wilson tells of one Cub that went online at 9 p.m. He had a call from a fellow at 9:15 asking if he could pick it up that night. Wilson suggested he get it the next day.

"When I got out of church the next morning, he was waiting," says Wilson. "He bought the tractor and 3 pieces of equipment to go with it."

Wilson always restores at least one piece of equipment for each Cub. He notes that finding the old Cubs and equipment is increasingly becoming a challenge.

"I pull them out of the woods or old barns," he says. "You should see what they look like, all covered in dirt and grease."

He compares buying one to buying a pig in a poke. He often doesn't know what he has until it's cleaned up.

"The most I ever paid was \$1,600, but it was in really good shape with a new set of tires," says Wilson. "I went through the engine, replaced seals, bearings and gaskets, and replaced the main bearings in the rear."

Perhaps the worst case was one that was covered in dirt and grease. He paid \$900 for it.



"Each tractor is torn apart and then rebuilt from the front to the back, a piece at a time," says Wilson.

"When I cleaned it up, I found the bottom of the radiator was split wide open, and both rear axle housings were cracked," recalls Wilson. "I ended up putting \$2,200 to \$2,300 into it and lost money when I sold it."

Wilson usually sells a tractor and implement for around \$3,500. The buyer who took a tractor and 3 implements paid \$4,500.

Soon to be 80, Wilson has restored 15 Cubs since retiring in 2015. It's a skill he learned the hard way, but doesn't plan to stop anytime soon.

"I read some service manuals and just started doing it," he says. "I have number 16 in my workshop now and 2 more waiting. I plan to keep doing this until the Lord calls me home."

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A flatbed trailer equipped with two 20-ft. beds serves as a handy, portable raised bed garden for Mark Crampton and his wife.

## They Garden On A Flatbed Trailer

When gardening season ends, Mark Crampton tows his garden beds out of sight. There are two 20-ft. beds built on a flatbed trailer that his father made years ago out of a 1930 Reo truck chassis.

"It had been sitting unused for years," says Crampton. "I was tired of bending over to work with my ground level raised beds and thought of putting raised beds on legs. I decided the trailer would make a good alternative."

Crampton edge stacked salvaged, 20-ft. 2 by 4's for garden bed sides. He reinforced them with several short pieces of 2 by 6. After lining the bed with garden fabric or weed mat, he added 6-8 in. of dirt.

"The weed mat prevents the dirt from falling through cracks in the original wooden

platform," explains Crampton. "It gets pretty heavy with the dirt, but I can still pull the trailer with my side-by-side."

The two, 30-in. wide beds leave room for a walkway down the center of the trailer, should Crampton need it. For the most part he plants, tends and harvests while standing alongside.

However the key benefit comes as weed seeds germinate. "It is really easy to keep the beds weeded," he adds. "At 30 in., I can just reach across while standing by the side of the trailer."

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## Collector Restores Rare Electrall Generators

"I'm not a farm kid, but I've had a lot of farm interests over the years, which included buying and restoring different vintage tractors and implements," says retired Minnesota engineer Don Olson. "In addition to tractors, my real passion over the past 20 years has been learning about, acquiring, and restoring Electrall generators." His current collection includes 5 different units.

Olson says the Electrall system was a concept co-developed by International Harvester and General Electric. It was introduced as optional equipment for a Super M-TA tractor in 1954 and then used on the Farmall 400 and 450 in the following 4 years. "Many rural areas didn't have reliable electricity, so the company thought that an optional tractor generator, priced at \$867, could provide backup power lights, milking machines, even power farm implements like combines, balers, grain elevators and more." The Electrall generator was rated at 10 KW and could supply single phase or 3-phase power.

Olson says that although the idea was good, the price was high and the company had also engineered live power take off as standard equipment for its tractor line, which really put the kabosh on the Electrall. "Maybe those engineers weren't talking to each other often enough and thinking things through," Olson says with a smile, "because within a short time the live pto was running all those implements that could've used the Electrall generator and electric motors."

Olson became a serious Electrall collector about 30 years ago after reading about it in a tractor magazine. "Finding one that I could mount on my tractor was a 3-year odyssey," Olson says. "because the people who had them weren't really willing to sell. It took me a lot longer, 15 years, to locate the companion motor for my 55 baler. That motor is a 3 phase, rated for 10 hp. continuous duty and 15 hp. intermittent duty. The tractor model could hook on a power pole and back up the whole farm. It had a special plug for 120/208 that supplemented for single phase

power in the house."

After locating the baler motor Olson spent about a year configuring everything on the tractor and baler. He's also refurbished a trailer-mounted Electrall, mounted one in the back of a 1957 International S-100 pickup and configured another for the IH 2-point fast hitch. "All of those configurations were marketed by IH back in the 50's, so I think I've got the bases covered," says Olson. He adds that IH also had plans to use an Electrall to run power tools, an electric chain saw, an air compressor and other shop tools, which never materialized.

His restored tractors and Electrall collection "really turn heads at tractor shows" Olson says. "A lot of people haven't heard of them so I spend a lot of time giving them the history."

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Electrall generators were introduced in 1954, when some rural areas still didn't have reliable electricity. Olson installed one on his Super M-TA tractor (above) that powers his "electric" McCormick 55W baler.

