

## Vacuum Added To Zero-Turn Mower

John Day of El Dorado, Ark., cobbled together a vacuum system for his zero-turn mower to collect lawn clippings and leaves.

He mounted an old Bluebird vacuum powered by an 8-hp. Honda motor to the back of his mower.

"I hinged it to the back of the mower and put tail wheels under the vacuum so it would not have a completely rigid connection to the lawn mower," says Day. "I then used an old Snapper Bag-N-Wagon dump trailer and built a plywood box to mount on it. I mounted the old Bluebird hood on top as an inlet to the trailer." He also mounted the Snapper discharge chute to the mower deck. The chute is easily removable for when he wants to mow using the side discharge.

The goal of this project is to collect lawn clippings and leaves for composting. Says Day, "I dump the clippings either in my chicken yard or on a large pile of wood chips. I stir the pile with my tractor to mix it. Eventually, I should have some excellent compost."

Day built a frame on the back using 1/4-in. hardware cloth, which is removable to dump the clippings.

Overall, the design works well, although Day has plans for upgrades. "The trailer is very top-heavy, so I need to widen the wheelbase to make it more stable," he says. "I turned the trailer over twice already."



Day used a Bluebird vacuum and Snapper Bag-N-Wagon to make his mower vac.

Despite some logistics challenges, the vacuum is a low-cost way to use a soil amendment that might otherwise go to waste. "I bought the vacuum from my brother, not knowing how I would use it. So far, besides the vacuum and the lawn mower that I've had for 12 years, I've only had to buy the suction and discharge hoses, which are dust removal hoses, the tail wheels, and a lot of bolts and screws to hold it together."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Day, 222 Union Road 320, El Dorado, Ark. 71730 (johnid3@yahoo.com).



Trailer's gooseneck-style hitch mounts to a receiver on a 4-WD 8144 Terra Gator. It originally carried a large bulk tank and applied dry fertilizer.

## Super-Sized Spreader Carries 45 Tons Of Manure

Texas farmer and custom operator Arno Gunnewick is all about big, highly-productive ideas. His latest is a 40-ft. long manure spreader that he and his crew built. The 10-gauge reinforced steel sides resemble those on an open-top railroad hopper car. Its undercarriage is made of thick beams taken from a worn-out step-deck semi-trailer. The rear end rides on the trailer's tandem axles that they widened and rebuilt to mount 48 x 31 high flotation tires. The trailer's gooseneck-style hitch mounts to a receiver on a 4-WD 8144 Terra Gator that originally carried a large bulk tank for dry fertilizer.

Gunnewick has used Terra Gator power units for 6 years to haul silage in his custom harvesting operation. "We've had nearly 20 of these over the years, and they work great," Gunnewick says. "They've got plenty of power, they're comfortable to drive and capable of road travel at nearly 40 mph." Operators don't need a CDL to drive them as they do with a truck or semi-tractor.

The Terra Gator's hydraulics power the spreader's apron and its giant vertical discharge beaters. They bought those from a spreader dealer and modified them to fit the back of the box. The completed super spreader can haul 40 to 45 tons in one load.



Spreader can haul 40 to 45 tons per load, reducing the number of trips required.

"The idea behind this is to replace the loads and trips from four or five spreader trucks with two of these super spreaders," Gunnewick says. "With the gooseneck rather than a drawbar hitch, we don't need to use high horsepower tractors with a bunch of electronics we don't need. Big tractors can be a lot more expensive to operate." Gunnewick says he'll use the second spreader behind a Case IH 4520 applicator power unit and figures the two rigs will save his business thousands of dollars a year in operating costs.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Arno Gunnewick (txharvester@gmail.com).

Deck weighs around 500 to 600 lbs., depending on size/model, and eliminates the need for a trailer to haul a snowmobile, UTV, or quad.



## Pickup Deck Holds ATVs, Snow Machines

Built in America by Tarp Pro Inc., the Dura-Deck is an all-season truck deck that eliminates the need for a trailer and is capable of hauling snowmobiles, UTVs, quads, and more.

Three Dura Deck models are currently available: the Pro (\$5,350), Elite (\$5,750), and Platinum (\$6,400). All three models offer a ramp assist, quick ski clamps, rear track tie-down, and caliber ski guides. While the Pro has a painted wood decking overtop the aluminum frame, the Elite's decking is rubber-lined for extra durability, and the Platinum goes one step further with all-aluminum decking.

Each of the three models is easy to install, with sliding sides expandable up to 102 in. and adjustable legs that ensure a low profile on the truck bed. A 10-ft. telescopic ramp makes it easy to load equipment, and the rear track tie-down ensures it stays in place. LED lights let you load in all weather and lighting conditions. Each deck includes four turnbuckles that hold the deck in place without any drilling.

The short box deck is 7 ft. 8 in. and fits all 6 ft. 4-in. to 6 ft. 6-in. beds. For an additional \$100, you can purchase a long box deck, which is 8 ft. 6 in. and fits all 8-ft. beds. The deck weighs around 500 to 600 lbs., depending on the model and which additional features are added. Optional accessories include electric sliding slides, flood lights



10-ft. telescopic ramp makes it easy to load equipment.

with a remote, a Bluetooth speaker, and custom wraps. Pricing ranges from \$200 to \$800.

Dura Decks are available for pickup in Tower City, N.D. They're also shipped across the U.S. and Canada via freight and must be delivered to a commercial address with forklift access. Email the company directly to work out pricing and logistics. Standard lead times are around 3 to 4 weeks.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tarp Pro Inc, 3433 132nd Ave. SE, Tower City, N.D. 58071 (ph 701-749-2200; tarpopro@hotmail.com; https://tarpproinc.com/dura-deck/).



Day's tool cuts down weeds and leaves the stalks long enough for easy removal.

## Mower-Mounted Hedge Trimmer

John Day of El Dorado, Ark., mounts a gas-powered Stihl HS 45 hedge trimmer on an old push mower deck to cut weeds around his one-acre pond.

"I'm almost 70 years old and always looking for easier ways of doing things," Day says. "Some weed stems around the pond were too large for a regular line trimmer."

Day removed the non-running engine from the mower deck and used a cutting torch to remove material from the bottom to provide more clearance. "I then drilled two holes in the deck and used two bolts from underneath to fasten the trimmer handle to the deck," he explains.

The resulting tool cuts down weeds and

leaves the stalks long enough for easy removal. "It works great!" Day says. "I've used it twice this summer and four or five times last summer. It cuts weeds both going forward and pulling them backward. I've even put a rope on the handle and pushed it down the back side of the levee where it's too steep to mow."

After trimming, Day goes over the area with a 3-ft. long rake to remove the clippings. "It doesn't cut as close to the ground as I would like, but I can't have everything," he says.

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