

Made It Myself

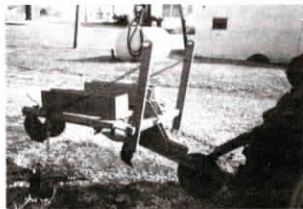
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Tractor-Mounted Tree Planter

"After I signed up with the CRP tree planting program, I decided to build a tree planter to plant my own seedlings," says William Craig, Akron, Ind., who built a 3-pt. mounted tree planter using parts from an old Deere wheelless subsoiler, an anhydrous fertilizer applicator, and junk steel he found around the farm.

The subsoiler mounts right behind the tractor. He cut off the original shank and replaced it with a new slotted foot that he made out of scrap metal and hard-surfaced it. The subsoiler can be adjusted so the foot can be set to work at any depth. A cutting coulter mounts ahead of the planting foot.

The back half of the tree planter hinges up and down. He mounted two cultivator gauge wheels on back at a V angle. These press and close the slit trench after seedlings are planted, eliminating air pockets around seedling roots and forming a slight ridge along the row. An old implement seat mounts directly above the closing wheels so the weight of the person riding maintains a constant pressure on the clos-



ing wheels. The back half of the planter was hinged so the constant pressure could be maintained on the wheels even when planting on uneven terrain.

Steel boxes along either side of the operator seat hold a total of 250 tree seedlings. "With the help of a tractor driver and another person to keep a steady supply of seedlings on site, I can plant an average of 425 trees per hour. To date, my crew and I have planted 19,600 new trees. It turned out to be a fun and profitable project."

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"No-Hydraulics" Bale Handler For Pickups

If you've been looking for a way to handle round bales with your pickup, you'll want to take a look at this 2-bale rig that requires no hydraulics to load and unload a pair of big bales.

Maurice Bourne, Marquez, Texas, wanted a simple, inexpensive way to retrieve bales from the field and move them to storage. Using a pickup lets him work in comfort and drive at highway speeds back to the farm.

A 10,000-lb. 12-volt electric winch is used to operate a bale fork at the back of the truck. The winch mounts on the front corner of the box. The cable runs back to a lift arm mounted on the side of the fork. It lifts up the first bale into a "cradle" mounted at the front of the pickup bed. Bourne then picks up a second bale - either from the side or the end - and raises it up at an angle, so the bale can't roll off in transit.

To unload, he simply drops the rear bale onto the ground and drives ahead. To unload the bale on the bale cradle, he

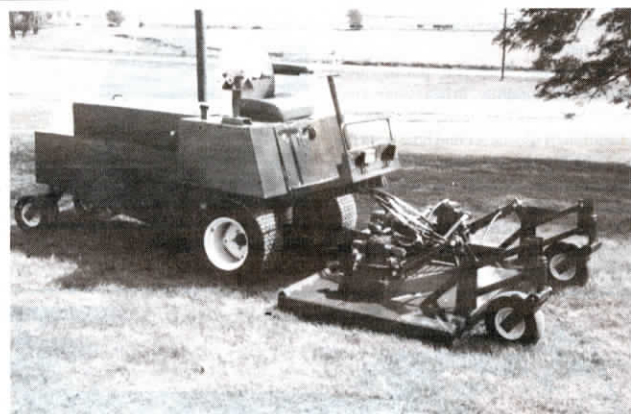


flips a trip lever that lets the off-center cradle fall backward so the bale rolls down onto the ground by gravity.

"I designed and built it in my shop and then had some guys help me slip it into the truck, bolt it down, and it worked great right off the bat. When not in use, you can take off the bale fork and cradle to free up the pickup bed."

Bourne says he can build the bale mover for about \$2,000, including winch. He'd also be interested in talking to manufacturers.

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Riding Mower Powered By V-8 Gas Engine

"It's quiet and comfortable to operate," says Don Robinett, Randall, Kan., about the riding mower he built that's equipped with an all-aluminum V-8 gas engine out of a 1962 Buick Special car. The engine powers three separate hydraulic motors mounted on the 6-ft. wide mower deck.

Robinett paid \$250 for the Buick at an estate sale. He removed the engine and mounted it backward, keeping the two motor mount cross members as well as the cross member that supported the transmission. He bolted a stub shaft onto the crankshaft and used a 12-in. double groove pulley to belt-drive two hydraulic pumps. One pump powers the motors on the deck and the other powers a pair of hydraulic motors that drive the 18-in. front wheels. He used 3/16-in. sheet metal to fashion the deck and sides of the mower and lighter weight sheet metal to make a flip-up engine hood.

"It's so quiet that I can listen to a tractor radio mounted next to the seat while I mow," says Robinett. "I use it to mow 3 to

4 acres of lawn as well as weeds around my grain bins. I wanted a big engine that could operate at lower rpm's without making a lot of noise. The engine runs at only 1,800 rpm's compared to 3,000 rpm's for engines on conventional mowers. I used the car's muffler to keep engine noise to a minimum.

"GM made the Buick Special for three years, from 1961 to 1963. The engine block weighs only 62 lbs. - about half the weight of the block on a cast iron engine. I can lift the entire engine by myself. It has 252 cu. in. which isn't a lot for a V-8, but it has plenty of power even at 1,800 rpm's. However, running the engine slow causes the fan to turn slow so I had problems with the engine heating up. I had to buy a heavy-duty special-built radiator with four rows of tubes instead of two. I also locked up the fan's clutch - by drilling a hole through it and inserting a pin - so it always turns at the same speed as the engine.

"I flip a toggle switch next to the seat to

activate a solenoid valve that engages the hydraulic motors. I use a pair of levers in front of the seat to control the drive wheels. By running one wheel forward and one backward at the same time I have zero turning radius. The 6-in. wide rear caster wheels are mounted on an oscillating axle which helps when going over bumps. I use a pair of hydraulic cylinders connected to parallel linkage to raise the deck as much as 12 in., which lets me mow 6-ft. tall wild sunflowers.

"The mower goes 8 mph on the road. I spent \$3,100 for parts and \$300 for each motor. Total cost was just under \$5,000.

"The deck has three 24-in. blades that overlap 1 in. so it has a 70-in. cut. The grass clippings go straight through from front to back. I welded fins under the deck so the blades can't transfer clippings to

each other. I didn't want side discharge because a 6-ft. deck would have left a big windrow. The hydraulic motors are bi-directional and are each equipped with two quick coupler hoses that lead to the pump - one pressure and one return. By switching the hoses I can reverse the motors so that the blades run in the opposite direction. The blades are flat and are sharpened on both sides so I can run them backward and get twice as much use out of them before resharping.

He mounted an oil cooler and air intake screen (the sieve off an old Massey Harris combine) in front of the radiator. The air intake screen keeps grass clippings from being sucked into the radiator.

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