Cub Cadet Lawn Tractor Powered By A V-8 Engine

You've never seen a garden tractor like this "Spare Time" tractor built by a Missouri lawn and garden equipment dealership.

Employees souped up the Cub Cadet with a 350 cu. in. V-8 Chevy engine.

"We had the engine and tractor sitting around the shop, and we just sort of built it as a joke," explains J.R. Bushdiecker, parts manager at Banner Equipment, St. Charles, Mo., and creator of the vehicle. "Because we did it for fun, we call it our 'Spare Time.'"

Getting the big Chevy engine in the Cub Cadet wasn't as big a job as you'd imagine, according to Bushdiecker.

"We just solid-mounted it," he says. "We had to raise the hood 2 in. to get it in and stretch the frame 15 in. to make it look right."

At two county fairs last summer "Spare Time" pulled a 5,000-lb. garden tractor sled the full length of a 250-ft. and 280-ft. track.

"The reason we took it to the fairs was to advertise Banner Equipment and as a conversation piece," Bushdiecker says, adding "there definitely was a lot of conversation about it."

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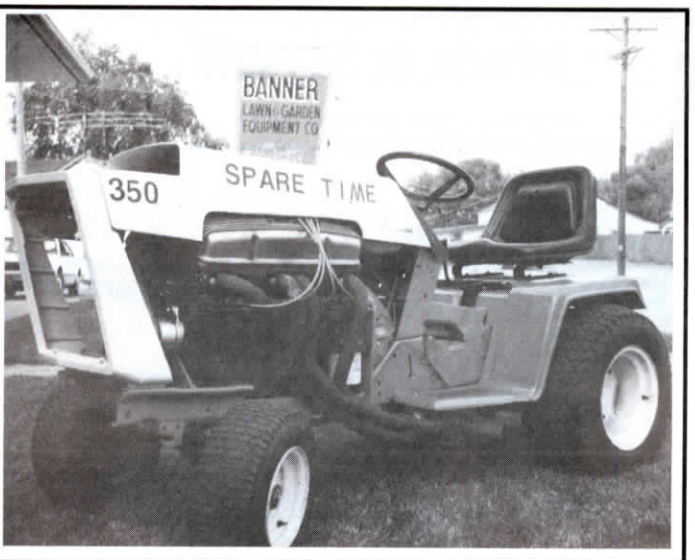

This Cornerpost Is "Solid As A Rock"

"We have lots of rocks in this area of Tennessee, many of them large flat ones just below the ground which makes it difficult or even impossible to dig postholes," says Harold Brewer, Lebanon, Tenn., who came up with an easy way to make "solid as a rock" cornerposts.

"My property line ends on a large flat rock. Since I had plenty of small rocks in the pasture, I made a round cylinder out of chain link fence and filled it with small rocks. It eliminates the need for concrete yet is very sturdy. And if you ever need to move it, you can disassemble it easily.

"I make in-line posts this way, too, only not quite so large and I only use them where I can't get a steel post into the ground. You can stretch the wire as tight as you want. These posts won't budge."

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Rebuilt Army Vehicle Hauls Hay Through Deep Snow

"It's great for getting hay out to cattle even in the deepest snow," says Charles R. Hays, Elgin, Ore., who rebuilt an old 1945 Army steel-tracked vehicle for use on his cow-calf operation.

"Francis the Blue Mule", as Hays calls the rig, was originally built by Studebaker as an open-topped tracked vehicle for transporting fuel and other supplies across the frozen tundra of Alaska. It had 22-in. wide steel tracks on rubber mounts that ran the entire length of the vehicle, and it had a Studebaker 4-cyl. engine, automatic transmission, and 2-speed rear end. At the end of World War II it was sold to an Alaskan sporting club which added a wooden deck, side racks, and a plywood cab to enclose the bucket seats. Eventually it was used by a woodlot operator in eastern Oregon for skidding logs. However, the heavy work caused an axle to bend, and Hays found the vehicle with a "for sale" sign attached, sitting alongside a highway.

He rebuilt the tracks, replacing all the missing rubber pads and broken track pieces. Then he cut off and discarded the entire outside structure and built a 6-ft. long, 3 1/2-ft. wide box with 1 1/2-ft. high sides. He also built a new cab complete with a paneled, carpeted interior and 1 1/2 in. of foam insulation around the sides. Then he spray painted the entire rig blue with white trim.

"It weighs 6,600 lbs., but it only sinks into the snow about 4 to 6 in. so we can use it in waist-deep snow," says Hays. "The rubber pads sink down and give the track's steel cleats a chance to grip the snow. It's about the size of a Chevrolet Luv pickup and has everything a pickup has including a horn, windshield wipers, turn signals, fog lights, brake lights, heater, and defroster.

"It goes up to 36 mph even across snow.

I often drive it to work in Boise, Idaho. As far as I know it's the only track vehicle of its type in Idaho that's licensed for highway use. However, it doesn't work well on icy roads because the track tends to 'skate'.

"The seller wanted $3,500 for it. However, he agreed to accept a custom-built trailer that I spent $1,500 to build."

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Rubber Tracked Utility Vehicle

"It's different from anything available on the market," says Fred Mowatt, a Burk's Falls, Ontario, inventor who built nearly every piece of his rubber tracked utility vehicle - including the rubber tracks - from the ground up out of spare parts and equipment he had on hand.

"It's something like the Bombardiers they make in Quebec, but it doesn't operate like one of them at all. It steers better than any factory-built machine I've ever driven," Mowatt says.

The 60-in. wide by 7 1/2-ft. long utility vehicle weighs 1 1/4 tons. It's powered by a 1975 Datsun 1200 c.c. car engine and has a Datsun 3-speed automatic transmission as well.

The open-seated, two-passenger tracked utility vehicle is about 4 ft. high and has disk brakes and heavy-duty double chain drive, one for each track. That's so tracks can be operated independently - one track can be stopped, while the other runs - for turns as on a Bulldozer.

There's one drive sprocket and three idler wheels per side. Drive sprockets are off an old Muskeg Buggy, which Mowatt had to make new centers for in order to bolt them to the vehicle's axles. Idler wheels are old 8-in. wide boat trailer wheels.

"I cut a 42-in. wide conveyor belt into strips 13 1/2-in. long and 6 1/4-in. wide and spliced them together to make track loops that are 18-in. wide," Mowatt says. "I used real soft, 5/8-in. thick, 2-ply rubber that won't freeze, even at 50 degrees below, like harder rubber or nylon tracks will."

Mowatt next attached steel cleats to the tracks to boost traction. He used J. 5 Bombardier cleats, which he had to repunch and rebolt so they'd fit the 18-in. wide tracks. "It took me almost 90 hours and 400 bolts to put those cleats on the tracks," he says.

Mowatt bought only a few parts, including drive chains, sprockets and 6 new ball bearings, to make his machine so he says he doesn't have a lot of money invested in it. "I even built all my own drive shafts and connectors," he says. "There's no problem building them."

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