Made It Myself

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"Double Engine" 4-WD Snowblower

"No one can believe how well it works," says Denis Desjardins, Alcove, Quebec, about the "double engine" snowblower he built using the chassis, wheels, and 4-cylinder gas engine from a 1981 Datsun 4-WD pickup and a 6-cylinder gas engine from a 1980 Chevrolet Citation front-wheel drive car.

Desjardins shortened the pickup chassis and driveshaft 3 ft. and used 1/8-in. steel plate to build a frame around it. The Datsun engine, mounted in front, drives all four wheels while the Chevrolet engine, mounted at the rear, powers the 6-ft. wide snowblower. The rig is equipped with three transmissions - the Datsun's 5-speed transmission, the Chevrolet's automatic transmission, and a 4-speed transmission borrowed from a Ford Pinto that's mounted in front of the rear engine.

"It's as powerful as a mini payloader and is built heavy so it has great traction. I can plow at 30 mph," says Desjardins. "I chose the Datsun pickup because it has 4-WD and a 5-speed standard transmission which lets me drive slow in first gear for working in deep snow. I put the rear engine in reverse and the Pinto transmission in fourth gear. I have to run the rear engine in reverse because the snowblower pto shaft is designed to run counterclockwise. The Pinto transmission speeds up the rear engine and lets me operate the snowblower at 2,000 rpm's. I can throw snow 20 ft. I had been using a Dodge 4-WD pickup equipped with a front-mounted snowplow as well as a Ford tractor equipped with a 3-pt. snowblower. My 'double engine' snowblower works better than either of them because I can rev up the snowblower engine without increasing my travel speed and go right through heavy snow without spinning the wheels. If the snowblower ever plugs up, I can reverse the auger to unplug it. I put chains on the front tires where most of the weight is. I've never got stuck. If I ever do get stuck, I've got an 8,000-lb. electric winch mounted on back that I could use to pull out."

Desjardins mounted the Chevrolet engine sideways in the back of the truck together with the transmission and axle. He cut off one half of the axle, then welded on a steel plate to keep that side from turning. A driveshaft runs from the other half of the axle to the Pinto transmission and continues to the snowblower.

Desjardins uses a 3-pt. mounted McKee snowblower equipped with a 1-ft. dia. auger. He adapted it to fit snowplow mounting brackets that he attached to the front of the rig. A hydraulic cylinder is used to raise the snowblower. By simply removing a pin Desjardins can remove the snowblower and replace it with a snowplow.

He used a bicycle chain, sprocket, and power window motor to build a remote-control, electric-powered snowblower chute that turns left or right. A pair of car heaters under the seat are used to heat the cab. A fan positioned between the two heaters pulls hot air from one engine and pushes hot air from the other engine. "It's so warm in the cab that I can work with my T-shirt on," notes Desjardins.

The doors have no handles but instead open electronically so that he can take his 3-year-old daughter with him and not worry about her falling out of the cab. "I use a switch mounted on the front grille to open the driver's door," says Desjardins. "Once inside I can open either door by pushing a button on the dash. I fasten my daughter in with a seat belt. I borrowed a solenoid switch from a Chevrolet starter and connected it to one end of a coat hanger. The other end of the coat hanger is connected to the door latch."

Each engine has its own separate ignition switch, charging system, and fuel tank. He installed boat controls between the seats to engage the Chevrolet engine and uses foot pedals to control the Datsun engine.

The steering wheel and two seats were salvaged from the Datsun pickup. A pair of 5-gal. gas cans are used as fuel tanks and are mounted under a hinged cover behind each side of the cab.

Desjardins spent about $2,000 to build the snowblower, including $600 for the snowblower and $250 for the pickup.

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12-Row Folding Narrow Row Cultivator

Roger Wessels, Fairbury, Ill., bought a used IH 133 8-row narrow folding cultivator and cut it in two, adding an extra 10 ft. in the middle to convert it to 12-row narrow.

Wessels says the biggest problem was making the split toolbar strong enough to handle the cultivator's weight. After cutting the 5 by 7-in. toolbar in half and inserting a new 10-ft. section, he welded a 3/4 in. thick steel plate, 7 in. wide and 16 ft. long, to the front of the toolbar and a 1/2 in. thick, 7-in. plate that's also 16 ft. long to the back side of the toolbar.

"The bar doesn't bend at all. It's plenty strong," says Wessels, noting that he had to be careful in welding the reinforcing plates in place so that he didn't distort the toolbar.

He paid $3,500 for the 8-row cultivator and then used gangs from a 4-row unit to increase it to 12 rows. He positioned the units on the cultivator so only two gangs mount on each of the folding wings. "I wanted 8 rows on the inside with 2 rows on either end because I've seen too many folding cultivators with 3 gangs on each end that have bent hinges. It's just too much weight."

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Hydraulic-Powered 60-ft. High-Clearance Sprayer

When Albert Harder, Butterfield, Minn., needed a new high-clearance sprayer, he couldn't find what he wanted on the market. So he decided to build his own - a hydraulic-powered, articulated steering sprayer equipped with a 60-ft. long boom and full-size tractor tires.

Harder's sprayer is equipped with two 250-gal. tanks in front. A 4-cylinder Deere diesel engine provides power to two hydraulic pumps, eight hydraulic cylinders, and four orbit motors. Each orbit motor powers a wheel. The sprayer's frame can be adjusted on-the-go from 90 to 106 in. wide, allowing use in rows from 30 to 40 in. wide. The boom can be raised from 3 to 6 ft. off the ground and tilted from side to side for use on hillsides.

"I've used it for 13 years now and have sprayed over 60,000 acres with it. It paid for itself long ago," says Harder, who operates his own farm and also custom sprays. "I use it mainly to spray 2,4-D with drop nozzles in tall corn and also to spray Basagran in soybeans. My sprayer pivots in the middle like a big 4-WD tractor so it turns short, and the rear wheels follow the front wheels so I don't drive over much corn while turning. The four big, equal-sized tires make for a smooth, stable ride and let me go just about anywhere, even in muddy conditions. If I want I can raise the boom higher than 6 ft. by loosening four bolts."

One of the sprayer's hydraulic pumps powers the orbit motors while the other pump powers the hydraulic cylinders. Two cylinders are used for steering with one cylinder located on each side of the hinge point. The boom is equipped with four hydraulic cylinders - one cylinder raises and lowers the boom, one tilts it up and down, and one on each side folds the sides back against sprayer for transport.

Harder salvaged four rear wheels from a Minneapolis Moline tractor and installed new tires on them.

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