Backhoe-Log Splitter

"I needed a backhoe to dig a trench, and I also needed a log splitter to cut firewood. So I converted an old worn out backhoe to do both jobs. My total cost was almost nothing," says Jackson Brown, Peach Bottom, Penn.

The home-built backhoe/splitter operates off the hydraulics on Brown's skid loader. He stripped away everything from the backhoe except for the crowd boom, which is equipped with a hydraulic cylinder and an 18-in. wide bucket. He made a pair of quick-tach metal brackets to match the mounting brackets already on the boom, and welded one on top of the skid loader bucket and the other on the bucket's leading edge. A pair of 1 1/2-in. dia. pins run through the brackets in order to attach the boom.

"To remove the backhoe/splitter I just pull both pins and a pair of hydraulic hoses," says Brown.

To convert the machine from a backhoe to a log splitter, Brown replaces the backhoe bucket with a 3-ft. long extension made from a length of steel I-beam. He made the extension by cutting a steel I-beam lengthwise down the middle, leaving 2 halves with holes drilled into their sides that slide onto a stub shaft on the backhoe boom. A pair of short vertical pipes also run down through both I-beams and into the boom.

A homemade wedge pins onto the backhoe's hydraulic cylinder and slides back and forth inside a gap between the 2 halves of the extension. A vertical steel "foot" welded onto the extension serves as a stop for the log.

"To remove the splitter I just remove the 2 pipes and 2 hydraulic hoses," says Brown.

He welded 2-in. angle iron and 1-in. thick steel together to build the wedge.

"I like how it turned out. I got the backhoe free and used scrap materials to build everything else. I also made a 6-in. wide bucket for it which I use to dig water and electrical lines," says Brown.

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Jackson Brown made brackets to mount an old worn-out backhoe to his skid loader bucket (left). Bucket can be quickly removed.

To convert the machine to a log splitter, Brown adds a 3-ft. extension and pins a home-made wedge onto backhoe's hydraulic cylinder. Wedge slides back and forth inside a gap between the 2 halves of the extension.

One-Of-A-Kind Tractor

What started life as a pile of random parts turned into a handy little tractor for Raymond Bishop of Lawrenceburg, Tenn.

The tractor is 12 ft. long and weighs about 3,400 lbs. It rides on 18.4-26 tires off a combine on back, and 7.00-15 tri-rib tires on front. Power is provided by a 2-liter, 4-cyl. engine from a 1971 Ford Pinto.

"I built it mostly out of scrap materials and spent very little on parts," says Bishop. "It doesn't have a 3-pt. hitch or a pto, but that's not a problem. I use it primarily to pull a ground-driven hay rake and to push and pull cars around our repair shop or load them onto trailers."

Bishop started with a used IH 340 rear end and transmission which he bought at a scrap yard and used 2 by 3-in. sq. tubing to build a frame. He attached the rear end to the front suspension system off a 1977 Chevy Impala.

The tractor has 2 transmissions – the Pinto's 3-speed automatic transmission and the tractor's 5-speed transmission, with the Pinto transmission connected to the rear end's input shaft. "The tractor has a variety of gear ratios that let me go from a crawl up to 45 mph, which is really handy to use," says Bishop.

Bishop adapted the Chevy's power steering pump and alternator to the Pinto engine. The Chevy's power steering box is connected with U-joints to the steering column off a Dodge truck. An 8-gal. beer keg tucked under the hood serves as the fuel tank, with an electric pump delivering fuel to the carburetor. He used aluminum to build the hood and dash and 1/2-in. conduit for the grill, and also added homemade gearshift levers and aftermarket gauges. He used 6-in. angle iron to build the hitch.

The tractor's exhaust runs down the right side of the tractor and comes out in front of the rear wheel. The front bumper is a piece of 2 by 3-in. sq. tubing, with 2-in. sq. on the top and bottom. An old tire on front serves as a bumper. "Sometimes we have to push cars around our shop, and if we get up against the back of a car the tire keeps from bending it up," says Bishop.

On the day he took the photos, Bishop was raking hay and had the rusty gas tank from a small engine strapped to a hub on one of the tractor's rear wheels. "The tank is filled with clean nuts and bolts, and as they tumble around they knock the rust off the inside of the tank," notes Bishop.

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Raymond Bishop built this tractor by attaching the rear end and transmission from an IH 340 tractor to the front suspension system off an old Chevy Impala. Power is provided by a 4-cyl. Pinto engine.

Chevy Engine Boosts Ford 8N Speed

Terry Kreutzer does wheelies with his Ford 8N just accelerating when driving down the street. The 1965, 265 hp Chevy engine pumps out 3,000 rpm's at half throttle, which Kreutzer says can make a Bush Hog gearbox smoke. Using radar, he once clocked it doing zero to 60 in 100 ft.

"The rear wheels were still spinning when I hit 100 ft.," says Kreutzer, who used to do repowers, but now specializes in restorations. "It is even faster now. It will do 30 mph in reverse. I use it to blade snow in the winter and do finish-up dirt work. It gets jobs done fast."

The repower had been necessary. Kreutzer, with the help of friend Donny Martindale, had slammed it into a tree in the late 1970's. Kreutzer was laid up, but the 8N was worse with its crushed engine, front end and other crushed components.

"Donny came to see me in the hospital, and I suggested we put a Chevy engine in the busted up 8N," recalls Kreutzer.

At the time, the two were running a speed shop, dropping Chevy V-8's in farm trucks to soup them up. "Everyone wanted to get to the elevator ahead of their neighbors, so we were keeping busy," recalls Kreutzer.

A few days later, Martindale showed up at the hospital to tell Kreutzer the engine was bolted in place. He was ready to start making the hood and put a new front axle under the 8N.

"He had the axle all figured out, but he died in a car accident before we could finish it."

Martindale made an adapter plate out of 1/2-in. steel to go between the tractor bell housing and the Chevy bell housing. Later Kreutzer had to replace the Chevy bell housing with a Lakewood Scatter Shield bell housing.

"The tractor would pull wheelies so high that when the front end came down, the Chevy cast iron bell housing would crack," explains Kreutzer. "Made from steel billet, the Lakewood is practically explosion proof."

Martindale also took the tractor clutch disk center to a machine shop and had them weld it to a Chevy clutch disk with its bigger splines. He also used the Chevy flywheel and Chevy starter. He made a new hood to mold around a gas tank from an old Baldwin combine.

Terry Kreutzer's Ford 8N is powered by a 265 hp Chevy engine that pumps out 3,000 rpm's at half throttle. "It gets jobs done fast," he says.

The front of the engine needed to mount to the new front axle that had been repurposed from a 1941 Ford pickup and turned upside down. Kreutzer made mounting brackets so the axle could pivot.

"I had to do some heating and bending of the arms that came off the spindles to get them to line up," he says. "I kept the original steering box."

Kreutzer mounted 305 heads on the engine. "I made dually exhausts with glasspacks so it sounds really nice," says Kreutzer. "It really makes heads turn."

He later added Baldwin wheels to the 9N rear axle for the Ford/Chevy hybrid. Kreutzer welded 8N centers on the Baldwin wheels.

"That gave us huge rear tires," he explains.

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