



Tractor is made entirely from plywood and 2 by 4's, except the tires and axles.

LOOKS LIKE THE REAL THING

Wood "Deere" Tractor Great Fun For Kids

"I enjoyed building it and my kids and grand kids have a lot of fun playing in it," says carpenter Gerry Foust, Watertown, Wis., about the full-size wooden "Deere" tractor he made.

The 8-ft. long, 7-ft. high tractor is made entirely from plywood and 2 by 4's except for the rubber tires and axles, which are made out of metal conduit. There's a 52-in. high "half tire" on each side on back and full tires on front. Both sets of tires have wooden wheel hubs. The cab can be entered from either side by climbing a built-in step-ladder. It has open windows and a 4-ft. long bench that can seat three or four kids. The hood slopes sharply down toward the front and has a muffler off an old drag racing car. There's even an authentic Deere emblem on front of the tractor.

Foust got a single used rear tractor tire free from a tire store and used a saber saw to cut it lengthwise in half. He took apart an old wooden reel that had been used to hold electric cable and used the two sides, nailing one onto each half tire. He made imitation lug nuts by drilling shallow holes in the wooden hubs and using a hammer to drive 1-in. long, 1/2-in. dia. carriage bolts into them. A length of 4-in. dia. metal conduit between the tires serves as the rear axle.

The front tires have 3/4-in. thick plywood wheel hubs. Foust cut the plywood into a circle that's 4 in. bigger in diameter than the hole in the tire, leaving 2 in. of overlap. He then cut through the tire's sidewalls and pulled them apart so that he could slide the plywood inside the tire where he screwed it on.

"It looks so real people have even asked me what kind of engine it has," says Foust. "My daughter has a lot of fun playing in it. The steering wheel was salvaged from a boat and turns freely. I put a couple of keys on a shoestring and made a slot in the dash so she can put the keys into the hook eyelet and pretend she's starting the tractor.

"I built two of the tractors and keep one on my farm and another one at my grand daughter's place. Each tractor weighs 500 to 600 lbs. I use a front-end loader to move them."

Foust has also built several other wooden play things including carriages, buggies, buckboards, pony carts, a wooden play train, a giant rocking horse, a Cinderella coach, and a circus wagon.

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Besides the 12,000 toys in their collection, the Duellmans' collection of pedal cars numbers 400 to 500 while their pedal tractor collection numbers more than 100.

MORE THAN 12,000 TOYS, PEDAL TRACTORS

Giant Toy Collection

By Bonnie Heidtke

Elmer and Berradette Duellman, Fountain City, Wis., have what Elmer calls "the happiest hobby anyone can have" - they collect toys and pedal cars, and they do it in world class fashion.

In fact, the Duellmans say they may have the largest toy and pedal car collection in the U.S. with 400 to 500 pedal cars and more than 100 pedal tractors including a John Deere 80 - the first pedal tractor ever made. Their pedal car collection includes two double-seat models (a similar one owned by someone else recently sold for \$50,000).

They've got a giant toy collection that numbers more than 12,000 toys of all kinds.

In addition, they have more than 100 full-size antique and classic autos and trucks that were built between 1910 and the 1980's. Elmer says most of the cars have limited mileage with one showing only five miles. They've also collected more than 20 full-size motorcycles including Old Indian and Harley Davidsons, as well as a number of scooters, bicycles, wagons, sleds, and tricycles.

They keep their collection in three large buildings on their farm. Their collection is an ever-present part of their life. For example, last year they decorated their Christmas tree with 111 toys.

Although he has a Packard Coupe val-

ued at about \$18,000 and other expensive items, Elmer says his most cherished treasure is a toy motorcycle with side-car because of its pristine condition. He turned down an offer of \$8,500 for it. But most of his toys are only for display and not for sale.

A wind-up toy manufactured in Germany in 1921 called "Powerful Katrinka" will walk along and lift another little doll up and down. A similar "Powerful Katrinka" sold for \$1,900 at an auction.

Their collection includes toys made from cast-iron, pressed steel, tin, Japanese tin, plastic, glass, wood, and rubber.

Retired from the salvage business, Elmer shows a special fondness for toy wreckers and has 200 to 300 wreckers on display. He had a replica made of his first wrecker - a 1955 Chevy. He bought most of his finds through auctions all over the country.

He priced the items in his collection by submitting photos of each item to three of his friends. The friends, who make a living buying and selling toys, all wrote the prices they thought the item was worth on each photo. Since then, he has written two price guides for collectors.

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