

Owner's Report On Best, Worst Riding Mowers

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"We have an electric deck-raising mechanism and lights on both of them. Both of these accessories work great."

Harold Cromwell, Salina, Kan.: "It starts easily, handles nicely, has plenty of power and is always ready for hard work," says Harold about his 1997 Deere LX 188. "This is my third Deere mower. Like the others, it's economical to operate and is ready for any challenge."

F.W. Burch, Young America, Minn.: F.W.'s only complaint with his 1996 Deere 425 mower is that the blades are too hard to sharpen and replace.

"Otherwise, it's dependable, turns extremely short, and is easy to operate."

Harvey Noll, Coleman, Wis.: Harvey's used his 1996 Deere LX 178 for three years to mow three big lawns and has had no repairs.

"It turns sharp, steers easily, and cuts well."

Raymond Burt, Turtle Creek, New Brunswick: "In the 1970's I bought a 1950's vintage Simplicity Model F two-wheel walk-behind garden tractor powered by a 2 1/2 hp engine and equipped with a 3-speed garden attachment. In 1976, I repowered it with a 3 hp Briggs and Stratton air-cooled engine. All I ever had to do to the engine was replace the carburetor in 1994. Both the engine and tractor, which I still use to push wet snow, are 'best buys'."

"Another 'best buy' is the two-wheel walk behind 5240 Gravely convertible tractor I bought new in 1984. It's powered by an 8 hp engine and 4-speed transmission, and I bought a close-coupled 30-in. rotary mower attachment for it. The tractor's built real rugged. My only complaint is that fine snow gets into the retractable starter on the two-stage 28-in. snowblower I bought for it in 1985 and freezes. I use a car engine warmer to thaw out the starter, as my shop is not heated."

Elmer Warolin, Milaca, Minn.: Elmer likes his 1995 Deere 322 equipped with 50-in. deck, but says it could use a few improvements, too.

"The speed control on the hydrostatic drive should be lower. Also, the hydraulic lift on the front blade is very fast-acting so it's hard to get a close adjustment in soft ground."

Don C. Catron, Lake Providence, La.: With a few exceptions, Don's well satisfied with his 1997 Deere LX 188.

"It needs larger tires and a larger seat. There's also a squeak - metal-on-metal - that I've been unable to find. On the other hand, the mulcher works great. I added an electrical plug to use when pulling my sprayer trailer with it."

Raymond Weed, Schuylerville, N.Y.: Raymond likes his 1994 Deere GT 262 mower equipped with 48-in. deck.

"It's easy to maintain, starts easily and does a good job cutting grass."

John Prichard, Oxford, Kan.: "A mower with a 42-in. deck ought to have a bigger gas tank," says John about only one of the problems he has with his 1993 Transmatic MTD lawn tractor.

"It only runs for one hour and 45 minutes before the gas tank has to be refilled. It will not turn short. The lights shine up in the air instead of on the ground so they're useless. The clutch and brake are one pedal. The mower moves when shifting from forward to reverse. The pedal has to be all the way down to operate the brakes but halfway up to shift. If I am in a tight spot and need to shift, I can't be moving. Some of the lubrication points are impossible to find. The operator's manual does a poor job of showing their location."

John R. Windsor, Sr., Oak Ridge, La.: "It's been trouble-free and has done all I've ever asked of it," says John, pleased with his 1992 Deere 430 mower. "I can't think of anything the company could do to improve it."

Kurt Leimkuhler, Lees Summit, Mo.: "The only problem I have with it is that it blows grass out the front of the deck and I have had several flat front tires from sharp rocks or wire being blown into them," says Kurt about his 1996 Agco-Allis 1616H mower. "Otherwise, it does an excellent job cutting and leaves the yard looking neat. It handles well on slopes and hardly scalps at all. It handles extremely heavy grass well if you slow down. I can mow all day on a 3-gal. tank of gas."

J. W. Lott, Glenmora, La.: J. W. can't think of any way to improve his 1998 Murray mower powered by a 12 hp engine and equipped with a 38-in. deck. "It performs flawlessly," he says. "I'm going to order a mulch kit for it."

Max Reinke, Dale, Ind.: "It's the best garden tractor we've ever had on the farm," says Max, pleased with his 1993 Deere GT 262. "It handles nicely, has plenty of power, and the mower deck is excellent."

Perry Stapp, Lufkin, Texas: A 1998 Deere LT 133 replaces Perry's old mower, a 1982 Deere that "ran for 16 years with few problems," he says. "I only had to replace the original seat with an aftermarket seat, which was much cheaper than a Deere replacement seat."

As for the new mower, Perry says the "blades could be of better quality since they don't seem to stay sharp for very long. The company should also include a cover for the mower with the sale."

Thomas S. Smith, Bowman, Ga.: "Satisfied for the most part" is how Thomas describes his



Garden tractor is powered by a 10 hp Briggs & Stratton engine up front and a 5 hp Briggs & Stratton engine in back.

Articulated, 4-WD Garden Tractor Has Two Engines

Mark Demascal, Assumption, Ill., put together two old 2-wheeled David Bradley walk-behind tractors to build an articulated, 4-WD rig that's powered by two engines and has a 2-wheeled cart for the operator to stand on at the rear.

Demascal mounts a 3-ft. wide blade on front of the rig to plow snow or scrape dirt. He can also hook up a rototiller, single moldboard plow, or 1-row cultivator behind the unit.

"It has a lot of power and is almost unstoppable," says Demascal. "I can use it in either 2 or 4-WD. When it's in 4-WD it goes faster than I can walk, which is why I made an operator platform for it."

Both tractors were originally designed to pull a single moldboard plow, disk, or cultivator. However, the front tractor was also designed to push a blade. It's powered by a 10 hp Briggs & Stratton gas engine while

the rear tractor is powered by a 3 hp Briggs & Stratton. Both tractors throttle together and clutch together. The frames are hooked together using the ball and socket off a boat trailer hitch, which also provides articulated steering. The ball is welded on back of the front tractor and the hitch is welded on front of the rear tractor.

A length of cable is used to raise and lower the blade.

He used angle iron and sheet metal to build the 2-wheeled trailer and a length of 3/4-in. dia. steel rod to build the axle. The wheels are off an old wheelbarrow. A hitch welded onto the back of the trailer allows him to pull sleds. The trailer hooks up to a hitch that he welded onto the back of the rear tractor.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mark Demascal, 406 W. Samuel St., Assumption, Ill. 62510 (ph 217 226-3121).

Home-Built Mower Cuts 66-In. Swath

"We've got two to three acres of lawn to cut around the farm and I got tired of spending two days a week on my mower cutting it," says Keith Kuhn, who built a tractor mower out of scrap and equipped it with a 66-in. wide home-built deck.

The Grainfield, Kan., farmer powered the mower with a 4-cyl. engine and 3-speed automatic transmission out of a Toyota Corolla car he bought for \$25.

He built a 6-ft. long by 60-in. wide frame out of one of the wings of a junked cultivator. He fitted the rear axle with the wheels off an old Massey Harris combine and the front axle with the Toyota's 13-in. rims.

A farm implement seat mounts on back of the mower. Kuhn made a steering wheel for the rig out of an old hot rod steering wheel he had.

The 66-in. wide deck is built from three 1940's vintage truck hubs welded together and covered with plate steel. It's equipped with an 18-in. front blade and two 24-in. rear blades. They're belt-driven off the motor crankshaft through a right angle gear-



Kuhn's mower is powered by a 4-cyl. engine out of a Toyota car.



box mounted on the deck.

Out-of-pocket expense was about \$500. Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Keith Kuhn, HC 1, Box 62, Grainfield, Kan. 67737 (ph 785 673-4228).

experience with a pull-type Bush Hog GT 42 he bought new in 1993.

"It has a Honda 11 hp engine on it and does a good job of cutting grass. However, you can't get close to things like fences with it because of the tires mounted on the outside of the deck."

Jerome Anderson, Swea City, Iowa: Jerome is reasonably satisfied with his 1993 Snapper mower, but complains that the belts are hard to work on because of their location.

"Plus, the flip-up deck is hard to clean out underneath. The front wheel on the deck also needs to be a little firmer and bigger," he says.

Jack W. Fennel, St. Joseph, Mo.: "The tie rods broke in less than a year and the steering gears are too small," says Jack about his 1994 Huskee TS2051C mower. "It also needs stronger steering points and a better blade drive. The company should make a deck that moves left or right while you're moving to allow you to mow outside the wheel tracks. It could be done with a rack and pinion-type device."

"I made a stronger pulling hitch for the mower since the existing tow bar was built too light."

On the positive side, Jack says he's happy with the mower's 20 hp Kohler engine, which has plenty of power.

Vincent Celder, Fairmont, Minn.: "I can't think of any improvements that would make it better or easier to operate," says Vincent, pleased with a 1996 Schweiss 1850 mower he bought used last year.

Gaylin Tanner, Declo, Idaho: Gaylin is happy with a 1997 Sears model 917-25652 mower

equipped with 15 hp Kohler Command engine and hydrostatic transmission.

"The only problem has been with the solenoid which stuck the third time I started the machine," he says. "I called the company and a repairman came out in a day and fixed it at no charge. I particularly like the Kohler engine, which has an oil filter and pump."

Still, he says there could be more foot room between the steering column and fenders because the design makes it hard to get on and off the machine.

"Also, I modified the blades by welding a piece of 1 by 2-in. flat iron the same thickness as the blade to the back of each cutter blade because it didn't have enough force to blow wet grass into the Sears bagging attachment I bought for the mower. I rounded off the outside edge of the flat iron pieces to clear the deck. Works great now."

Jack O'Connell, Cottage Grove, Ore.: "I've had few problems with it and parts are easy to get from most any dealer," says Jack about his 1995 Deere GT 275 mower.

"However, the company could improve the tail light reflector mounting method because the slightest bump into a post or tree knocks them off," he says.

Kurt Siemens, Rosenort, Manitoba: "It's the best mower I've ever owned," says Kurt, pleased with his 1996 Deere 455 equipped with a 60-in. deck, a blower and cart bagger system, and a 50-in. tiller.

"Only two things could possibly improve it," he says. "The first is a larger front wheel on the