



This 1973 Deere Hydro 140 equipped with a front-end loader was originally equipped with a Kohler 14 hp engine. Kaczmarek replaced it with a 14 hp Vanguard.



Deere 317 tractor originally had a Kohler 17 hp engine, which Kaczmarek replaced with a Vanguard 20 hp model. Note external oil filter relocation kit (arrow).

By Bill Gergen, Senior Editor

## Repowered Garden Tractors Work “Better Than New”

If you have an older model garden tractor that has a worn-out engine but the rest of the tractor is still in good shape, you'll be interested in the repowering service provided by Jim Kaczmarek of Hastings, Minn.

Kaczmarek specializes in replacing Kohler 1-cyl. and other engines with new Vanguard 2-cyl. “twin overhead valve” engines. He will repower your tractor right in his shop, or sell you the engine along with a kit that lets you do the job yourself.

“On most tractor models the new engine bolts right in. On other models, the tractor frame may have to be modified quite a bit. In all cases, the engine side panels fit like they did before so you can hardly even tell the tractor has been repowered,” says Kaczmarek.

Some of the tractors he commonly repowers include the Deere 140, 314, 317, 318, and other models; Cub Cadet 682, 782 and 1450; Ariens GT 14; and Case 446.

“The Vanguard engine runs smoother and in many cases has more power than the Kohler,” says Kaczmarek. “One problem on

some Kohler models is that they don't have an oil pump so if you use the tractor on hills the engine can run dry.”

The Vanguard engines range from 14 to 23 hp. “We use the Vanguard because it's a high quality engine with a lot of torque, and it's also smaller so you can add more power without having to make many modifications to the tractor frame. We use the tractor's original key switch and ignition but install a new starter. In cases where we have to install an external oil filter, a hole is drilled into the tractor frame. We order the engine without the exhaust manifold and muffler, which we install separately. The muffler can be mounted on either side of the tractor or even out the front.”

One unusual repower job involved a 1973 Deere Hydro 140 garden tractor equipped with a front-end loader. It was originally powered by a Kohler 14 hp engine. Kaczmarek replaced it with a 14 hp Vanguard engine 15 years ago, and it's still running strong today. “The Vanguard engine has a lot of power for its size,” says Kaczmarek. “There's 200 lbs.

of liquid in each rear tire on this tractor and also about 500 lbs. of weight on back. The tractor alone weighs about 700 lbs. and the loader about 400 lbs., for 2,000 lbs. total. The loader can haul a load of about 700 lbs. That's a total weight of 2,700 lbs. However, the Vanguard 14 hp engine has enough torque that it can power the tractor and also operate the loader with no problem.

“Another advantage of the Vanguard engine is that it's relatively lightweight. The original Kohler weighed about 140 lbs., but the Vanguard model weighs only 95 lbs. The lighter weight makes the tractor much easier to steer.”

Cost varies depending on the tractor model and engine used, but generally is in the \$1,800 to \$2,000 range when Kaczmarek does the installation work. Do-it-yourselfers can purchase the engine and kit for \$900 to \$1,450, depending on engine size. An oil filter relocation kit sells for about \$130, and a stub shaft kit for about \$70. The exhaust manifold and

muffler sell for about \$80.

He started his repowering business in 1988 and says business has grown every year. He has customers as far away as Montana and Wyoming. “Some of the original engines on older garden tractors are becoming obsolete and aren't even available any more. The Kohler 20 hp engine is a good example,” says Kaczmarek. “We always have a big supply of new Vanguard engines on hand and also keep a good supply of Deere garden tractor parts and some Cub Cadet parts. We also sell repowered garden tractors already fitted with Vanguard engines.”

Besides repowering garden tractors, Kaczmarek has also used the Vanguard engine to repower Bobcat and Case skid steer loaders and even a 5-wheeled Deere Gator.

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## Deere Garden Tractor Specialists

Jim Lundell recently called to tell us about his family's growing business. He and his sons, Brad and Brian, who farm near Kiron, Iowa, buy and sell used garden tractors and parts. They ship parts to buyers all over the U.S. and Canada.

“We can supply used parts for just about any Deere garden tractor made up through the mid 1980's,” says Jim. “As far as I know, no one else offers parts for these tractors on the scale that we do. We have about 100 garden tractors on hand which we use for parts. We buy a lot of tractors from dealers and also at auctions. It's surprising how many people are still using old 1970's Deere lawn tractors. It's because these tractors were built so well that they don't wear out.”

Lundell says people often come to them after learning that their Deere dealer doesn't have the parts they need, or that the parts are too expensive. “For example, someone from Maryland recently called who had a 400 model built in the late 1970's. He needed two side panels and a grill for it. We happened to have a good used grill at a fraction of the cost

that Deere wanted.

“The most parts in demand might be gas tanks and mower decks. We also sell a lot of engines, flywheels, blocks, steering columns, steering wheels, side panels, transaxles, hydrostat parts and even complete hydrostats,” says Jim.

The Lundells recently converted their barn into a garden tractor parts store. “We remodeled the entire upstairs and installed parts bins and shelves along the walls. We bought the parts bins from local dealers who were going out of business.”

The Lundells also collect and restore garden tractors. Their goal is to restore one tractor from every farm machinery line. But it's the Deeres they're most interested in. Their specialty is Deere's Patio Series (Vol. 25, No. 2).

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Jim Lundell and sons Brad and Brian, keep a large supply of used Deere garden tractors and parts on hand at their business near Kiron, Iowa.



These photos show some of the different kinds of parts available including mower decks, fuel tanks, tires and other items.



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