



Darrell Demaray pulls two 22-in. push mowers behind his 48-in. Deere all-wheel steer riding mower. Each mower hooks to a single 8-in. high caster wheel on front.

## Caster-Wheeled Ganged Mowers

"It works even better than I expected and has reduced my mowing time by more than half," says Darrell Demaray, Sinai, S. Dak., who pulls two 22-in. push mowers behind his 48-in. Deere 277 all-wheel steer riding mower.

The front wheels were removed from the two push mowers. Each mower hooks to a single 8-in. high caster wheel on front. A pull bar runs across the back of the riding mower. Each caster wheel attaches to the pull bar via a bushing and a bolt.

"I've used it for two years with no problems. I have a 5-acre yard with a lot of trees and shrubs. The ganged mowers go around and under trees as good, if not better than the Deere mower alone," says Demaray. "As the all-wheel steer mower's rear wheels turn they

cause the push mowers to track right behind. I already had one of the push mowers and paid \$170 for the other one. The caster wheels came off an old Snapper riding mower. My total cost was about \$250.

"I raised the discharge cover on the Deere mower so that grass flies over the 22 in. of grass not yet cut on that side of the mower. The pull bar is made from spring steel which is able to flex up and down when mowing along roadside ditches. To change the mowing height on the push mowers, I lift the deck and install 1/2-in. thick shims."

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"I use it to pick up and grind leaves around my house," says Pat Prom about the blower-vacuum he made to fit his garden tractor fitted with a mower.

## Home-Built Leaf Blower-Vacuum

"It holds twice as much as most commercial baggers for garden tractors, so I don't have to empty it nearly as often. And it cost far less," says Pat Prom, Eden Prairie, Minn., about the leaf blower-vacuum he made to fit his Deere X485 garden tractor equipped with a 62-in. mower deck.

Prom bought a new impeller and mounted it on the discharge side of the deck. The impeller is driven by a double pulley off the deck that's connected to a right angle gearbox. He made a wooden box that measures 4 ft. by 4 ft. by 18 in. deep and mounted it on back of the tractor. A length of 6-in. dia. flexible poly hose runs from the impeller to a hole cut into one side of the box. The box has two doors on back of it, with one lever used to lock both doors. A section of 1/4-in. metal screen, mounted at a 15-degree angle, is mounted inside the box to keep leaves from blowing out the other side. An old pair of pants placed over the chute directs dust downward.

The front side of the box has a trailer coupler attached to it that mounts on a 2-in. ball on back of the tractor. The top part of the box is fastened to the back side of the tractor frame by a pair of quick-release pins.

"I used it to pickup and grind leaves around my house. It really works good," says Prom. "Last year I filled thirteen 55-gal. bags with

ground-up leaves. If I had raked them up I would've had to fill 300 to 500 bags. The tractor has more than enough power to handle the impeller. I paid \$40 for the hose. My total cost was about \$150.

"I had been using a Deere leaf blower-vacuum equipped with three bags. An engine on the right side of the unit is used to drive the impeller. It worked good except that the air cleaner on the engine is located next to the bags and got dirty, so it always choked the engine."

Prom made his own 5-ft. front-mount dethatcher to use with the blower-vacuum. The dethatcher is equipped with a series of tines designed for the pickup on a Deere baler. There are two rows of staggered tines, mounted on a pair of 3/4-in. dia. pipes. The front part of the dethatcher rides on a pair of caster wheels, which keep tine depth uniform on uneven ground. A hydraulic cylinder is used to raise and lower the dethatcher, while a pair of chains allow it to float. The dethatcher pivots from side to side on a 1-in. dia. shaft and also is free to pivot up and down.

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Homemade flexible hitch allows Chris Rahman to pull a 22-in. push mower 2 ft. to the side of his Deere garden tractor.

## Side-Mounted Mower Flexes On Sidehills

Mowing ditches and steep hillsides is no longer a problem for Chris Rahman, Ferdinand, Ind., who made a flexible hitch that mounts on back of his Deere 325 garden tractor. It lets him pull a 22-in. push mower 2 ft. out to the side of his tractor.

The mower swivels up and down at the end of a frame made from 1-in. sq. tubing. The frame hinges in two places - one behind the right rear tractor tire, and the other next to the deck. The mower hitch mounts on a bracket he mounted on back of the tractor. A chain attached to the deck keeps it from angling down too far so gas won't spill out of the engine.

"It works really well for mowing hills, banks and pond dams," says Rahman.

He also mounted a 42-in. Snapper blade on front of the tractor. The front part of the mounting bracket is made from 3/16-in. thick, 1 1/4-in. sq. tubing and attaches to the tractor frame with four bolts. A rod bolted to the



Rahman mounted a 42-in. Snapper blade on front of tractor. A rod bolted to the hydraulic deck lift mechanism on tractor is used to raise and lower blade.

hydraulic deck lift mechanism on the tractor is used to raise and lower the blade. "It was a very inexpensive way to make a front blade for my tractor. It's very sturdy in all types of terrain," says Rahman.

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By turning a Cub Cadet garden tractor around and mounting a 48-in. deck on front, Jon Whitledge was able to convert it into this low-cost zero turn mower.

## Cub Cadet Converted To Zero Turn Mower

Jon Whitledge didn't want to spend the money for a new zero turn mower. So he converted a 1970's Cub Cadet garden tractor, turning the tractor around and mounting a 48-in. deck on front. The deck is powered by its own 16 hp Briggs & Stratton 2-cyl. engine and is raised and lowered by a 3-pt. hydraulic lift.

"I spent only about \$300 to build it. Even a used zero turn mower would have cost \$2,500 or more," says Whitledge.

He bought the hydrostatic drive Cub Cadet from a friend for \$125. The tractor was equipped with a 12 hp Kohler engine, which he rebuilt, and a belly mount, 36-in. deck. He removed the deck and turned the tractor around so the rear wheels face forward. He also turned the ring and pinion gear upside down to reverse the gears. As a result, all reverse gears now go fast and all forward speeds go slow. He borrowed the steering gear from another tractor and mounted it on the Cub Cadet's rear end. The engine direct

drives the tractor's power steering pump, as well as a hydraulic pump that's used to raise and lower the deck. He also turned the seat around, replacing the original seat with a padded metal tractor seat.

He made his own 3-pt. hitch and mounted the deck on it. The deck can be hooked up to any standard Cat. 0 3-pt. implement including a cultivator, snow blade, and rototiller.

"I can turn on a dime, and I have an excellent view of the deck in front of me," says Whitledge, who made the conversion last winter. "A big advantage is that I can operate the mower's speed independent of the tractor's speed which results in an excellent job of mowing. I use separate throttle and choke controls to operate the engine and belt clutch that drives the blades. The deck is supported by a pair of 10-in. caster wheels which I bought from Harbor Freight."

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