

“Tiller Trailer” Takes The Work Out Of Rototilling

“I’m 72 years old and find that it’s much easier to ride a garden tractor than it is to wrestle with a front tine rototiller,” says Virlyn Burie, Wallace, Mich., who built a “tiller trailer” for his 30-year-old Deere rototiller. It allows him to pull the rototiller behind his Sears garden tractor, instead of having to operate it manually.

The 2-wheeled trailer is made from 2 by 2 steel tubing and pins to the sides of the rototiller. A sprocket-type lever welded on front of the trailer attaches to a hinged bracket he mounted on front of the tiller. He uses the trailer-mounted lever to control the depth of the tiller. The trailer is painted Deere green to match the tiller.

“I use it on my 30 by 60-ft. garden. It works great,” says Burie. “The rototiller has a forward motion of its own so the garden tractor is just guiding it, not pulling it. It takes only about 30 seconds to remove the rototiller from the trailer if I ever need to operate it manually.

“To operate the rototiller, I roll it into the trailer frame and pin it on. After rope starting the tiller and revving up the throttle, I adjust the lever to the depth I want. Then I jump on the tractor and go. Usually I operate the rototiller at its maximum depth.

“I spent \$5 apiece for the wheels, which I bought new. The rest of the trailer was built from scrap material. Commercial rototillers designed to be pulled behind a garden tractor are available, but they can sell for as much

as \$1,000.

“The key in building it is to locate the pivot points so the rototiller always operates at the proper depth. Before building the brackets, I put both the trailer and rototiller on a level floor and put wood blocks under the trailer until I had the rototiller at the depth I wanted it. Then I marked the spots for the pins.”

He used 1/4-in. steel plate to make the cog-type lever. The lever handle pivots from the center of the sprocket. To make the teeth, he placed the chain sprocket on the metal and then traced around it. Then he drilled around an old no. 60 chain sprocket.

Homemade brackets attach permanently to the rototiller. A 3/4-in. pipe welded to a piece of 2 by 4 rectangular tubing mounts across the rear with a 1/2-in. bolt. On front of the tiller is a yoke that mounts across the front and sides of the tiller frame that pins to the depth lever.

“At first I tried mounting a length of angle iron across the front of the rototiller and hooked it onto the lever. However, whenever the rototiller would hit a stone it would lurch upward and bend the tiller frame. Plating the sides of the tiller frame to the angle iron with 4 by 3/16-in. plate solved the problem,” notes Burie.

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Rototiller pins to 2-wheel frame behind tractor. Depth is controlled by a lift lever on front.



In the raised position, the rear wheels of the tiller are actually about 1 in. above the trailer wheels. At full depth all four wheels are at the same level.

Rubber Horseshoes Cut From Tires

By Heather Smith Thomas

When Grant Baldwin, Salmon, Idaho, went looking for a different way to shoe horses, he hit on the idea of cutting rubber shoes out of discarded pickup tires.

The shoes worked so well he built a hydraulic-powered machine that cuts up to 24 number one size shoes out of a single truck tire. What’s more, because he screws the shoes in place rather than nailing them, they’re easy to use for do-it-yourself farriers.

The rubber shoes cover the bottom of the foot except for the frog. Baldwin says they’re so tough they’ll last longer than iron.

He uses a battery-powered screw gun to screw them in place. “An advantage to screws is you can put the shoe on very easily, without tapping on the horse’s foot. Horses like that better,” Baldwin says.

The screws don’t have to come out the side of the hoof wall to be clinched, like nails, since they hold nicely on their own. “Just aim it into the hoof where you want it. You can put it a lot closer to the outside of the hoof than you can a nail, since it doesn’t have to come out the side,” he says.

You can use screws with large heads or small ones, depending on ground conditions. You can also put in as many screws as you

want into the rubber shoe since you can put them anywhere around the foot.

Baldwin hasn’t had much trouble with screw heads breaking or wearing off.

He cuts the shoes out of the tire sidewall. “This leaves the tire tread intact and when you spread it out flat you have a nice piece of tread about 7 ft. long which can be used for other things around the farm,” says Baldwin.

In addition to a longer lifespan, rubber shoes have other advantages over metal. They conform to the foot and have some give. Any extra rubber sticking out can be trimmed off - much easier than trying to perfectly fit a metal shoe to the foot.

If the horse is traveling in rocks or going in and out of a trailer, the rubber shoe won’t catch on anything. If a metal shoe gets “hung up” it usually pulls off and tears the hoof wall. If the rubber shoe gets caught on something, the rubber generally gives and bends and then comes loose. Horses can’t hurt themselves with rubber shoes. Rubber is more forgiving than metal if a horse hits himself with a shoe, or steps on himself. If a group of horses are milling around a corral and step on one another, the rubber won’t cause injury. Horses



Rubber horseshoes have a longer lifespan and conform better to the foot. Baldwin screws them in place instead of using nails.



traveling on pavement don’t wear out their shoes and the rubber helps minimize concussion. One disadvantage is too much traction (rubber grips asphalt so well, there’s no slide). A horse traveling faster than a walk might suffer tendon/ligament or joint injury due to the foot stopping so abruptly.

At press time, Baldwin says he wants to sell the shoes and screws as a kit and is negotiating marketing and sales agreements.

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Baldwin built a hydraulic-powered machine that stamps out up to 24 rubber horseshoes out of the sidewall of a single truck tire.



Low-Cost Tractor Top

“I wanted a cover over my head when using my Cub Cadet to provide protection from sun and rain. I checked with my dealer and discovered that a commercial cover for this tractor sells for approximately \$600,” says Jim Harkness, Laingsburg, Mich.

“I happen to have a friend who repairs golf carts and I asked him about the availability of a golf cart cover. He indicated that a new

cover, with all of the necessary hardware and mounting frame, would sell for only about \$150. I had to modify the supports with a little welding and painting but the job was completed in about a day. Looks factory new and works great.”

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A commercial tractor top would have cost \$600 so Harkness bought a golf cart cover and modified it to fit his Cub Cadet.