Richard Turner's Ford lawn tractor is equipped with a standard Kohler 10 hp gas engine that can be powered by either gas or natural gas.

He Mows Grass Using Natural Gas

Richard Turner uses natural gas from a well on his property to power his Ford lawn tractor.

The tractor is equipped with a standard Kohler 10 hp gas engine that can be powered by either gas or natural gas. He pulls a 32-gal. natural gas tank on a home-built trailer behind the tractor, with a smaller tank mounted on a bracket behind the tractor's seat. A flexible hose runs from the 32-gal. tank up to a "demand flow regulator" that mounts on one of the tractor's fenders. From there the gas goes through a heater hose to a venturi that's connected to the tractor's carburetor where it's sucked into the engine.

"We have a lot of natural gas wells in this area. I get 100 lbs. of pressure out of our gas well to fill my tanks. I use a quick coupler to hook a hose to the tank so I can fill up my tanks. I didn't have to make any modifications to the engine," says Turner.

He borrowed the demand flow regulator from a Lincoln welder that he had bought 30 years ago. "The welder came with a 10 hp Kohler engine, which I had the company set up to run on propane. They added a small propane tank and mounted the regulator on the welder's handle. Propane ran from the tank through a high pressure flexible hose and up to the demand flow regulator.

"At first I used just the trailer-mounted 32-gal. tank, but I was able to go only for about 20 minutes before I had to refill the tank. By adding the smaller propane tank I can now go a half hour before I have to fill up again," says Turner. "It takes only about 1 1/2 minutes to fill up both tanks. I use an on-off valve located behind the demand flow regulator to switch from regular gas to natural gas.

"I mow about two hours per week which would probably cost me about $5 worth of gas ordinarily, but instead of spending money for gas I spent $80 on hoses that I use to hook up to the natural gas well and more money on the tank and fittings, so it'll take a while to break even. However, I'm a tinkerer and enjoy trying new ideas so it was worth my time."

He says a similar system could be used to operate on liquid propane.

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John Benoit extended the frame on a 1989 Montgomery Ward riding mower to 11 ft., converting it into a self-propelled grill.

Custom-Built Cookout Grills

John Benoit has been making some of the world's most unique grills for more than 30 years, both for himself and custom-built for others. He recently sent FARM SHOW photos of some of his favorites, all of them built around 55-gal. barrels.

Riding Mower Grill

"This one gets a lot of attention wherever I go," says Benoit about the riding mower he converted into a self-propelled grill.

He started with a 1989 Montgomery Ward riding mower. He cut off the front axle and extended the tractor frame to 11 ft. He made the extra-large grill itself by welding one-third of a barrel to the end of another one. A pair of exhaust ports on top of the grill allow smoke to exit.

"We use this grill at family cookouts and parties. Because of its length it's a little tricky turning corners," says Benoit.

Steam Engine Grill

Benoit's steam engine grill has a working bell, air whistle, headlight, and cow catcher. A window in the cab makes it easy to store utensils and food inside. The cab roof hinges up out of the way for access.

Chevy Engine Grill

The Chevy engine grill is fitted with a header, Mickey Thompson valve covers, an Elderbrock 4-barrel carburetor, and shiny exhaust pipes off a Chevy 350 engine. A 12-volt battery is used to operate a Toyota car fan on front, which blows smoke through the exhaust pipes. The radiator grill on front was taken from an old Chevy. The grill rides on a pair of lawn mower wheels.

Chevy engine grill is fitted with a header, Mickey Thompson valve covers, and exhaust pipes off a Chevy 350 engine.

"The draft on this grill really works great," says Benoit. "One time my grandson and I cooked a 15-lb. turkey in just 2 1/2 hrs., yet we opened and shut the lid only once.

"The wheels make this grill so easy to move that a 10-year-old kid can run it across a driveway. The handles on both sides of the grill are made from material from my late grandma's bathroom."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Benoit, 2486 Sportsmanclub Road, Bourbonnais, Ill. 60914 (ph 815 791-3605; www.bletdiv474.org).

A 150-ft. clothesline runs from the Eakins' house to a tree across the yard. A bicycle wheel pulley mounts 50 ft. up in the tree, and there's another one at the house.

Wilma's Motorized Clothesline

Marlon Eakins, 85, lost his job as "solar dryer operator" the day he built his wife a powered clothesline. Before that, Eakins was the motor.

"Wilma likes drying clothes outside," says Eakins, who ran a 150-ft. clothesline from the wall of his house to a tree across the yard. A bicycle wheel mounts about 50 ft. up in the tree to act as a rope pulley. There's a bike wheel pulley at the house end also.

Problem was a line of wet clothes gets pretty heavy, and Eakins had to stick around during laundry time to manually move the clothesline. He put himself out of a job by motorizing the pulley with a $40 12-volt mini winch and a 10-inch rubber drive tire. Eakins hooked up the winch to a 12-volt battery in the building and bolted the winch motor to the rubber tire, positioned so it rubs against the metal bike wheel. The controller moves the line at a nice speed and has forward and reverse.

"Wilma thinks it's awesome, and usually someone's there that likes to push the button and be the engineer," Eakins says.

With a line that high in the air, clothes dry very quickly, Eakins notes. He recommends using good quality clothesline that won't stretch.

"Everyone eyeballs it," Eakins says, though people who know him aren't particularly surprised. "Everything I've got has a motor, winch or wheels on it."

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A 12-volt winch motor is bolted to a 10-in. rubber drive tire, which is positioned so it rubs against the metal bike wheel.