

Pint-Size Tractors Fit The Need

Gary Anderson's tractors may be small, but they get the job done. From garden tractors to a working tractor for his toddler son to a memorial to his grandfather, Anderson has built them all. Whether it's a working half-size model of a 1917 Mogul 8-16 or a G-style Allis Chalmers, most parts were salvaged or given away.

"I built my first tractor in 1972 for mowing, cultivating and snow plowing, and it still works," says Anderson. "The body was cut from plywood, and it had transmissions from two old Chevys, a rear axle from another small car, and a steering gearbox from an old truck."

The frame was made with angle iron, and the front axle was fashioned from pipe. An 11-hp Briggs and Stratton gave it all the power Anderson needed for his 5-ft. wide implements. He made the cultivator and the snow blade and adapted the mower to the tractor. The snow blade raised and lowered hydraulically with the pump driven directly off the engine. He used a peanut butter jar for an oil reservoir.

Anderson ran a belt from the engine to the drive. The homemade garden tractor featured not one, but two transmissions, one a 3-speed from a 1938 Chevy and the other from a 1939 Chevy straight stick on the column.

"It could creep along or travel down the road at 20 mph," says Anderson. "Until recently I used it for snowplowing. After the first winter, I built a cab out of plywood. I could work in the coldest weather without gloves. The cab even had a beacon on the top, lights and a horn that ran off the battery."

Anderson's next tractor was made for his two-year old son in 1985. At the time he had no access to a welder, so nearly the entire tractor was made from wood, including the wheels.

A 2-hp Briggs and Stratton gave it just enough power to pull a couple coaster wagons with other kids on it. Anderson pulled a very small rack and pinion system from a car at the local salvage yard and adapted it to other scrap parts to make a steering system. The simple drive consisted of a belt to the axle with pulleys sized so top speed was only walking speed.

"My son quickly learned that he could hold the foot pedal down to keep the clutch engaged. I think he and my daughters learned the basics of driving with that tractor. He drove it until he was at least 8, and now my granddaughter is starting to use it."

Anderson's latest tractor is one he built in the style of a model G Allis-Chalmers.

He needed a smaller tractor and blade for clearing snow on sidewalks in his neighborhood. The Chinese-built 6.5-hp motor he bought for \$90 was one of the few parts he purchased new.

"I recycled a transmission and differential from an old riding lawn mower," says Anderson. "The steering box came out of an old truck, and the back wheels from an old swather. Most of the other parts came from the scrap box."

The differential had sprockets on each side and he used them to drive sprockets on the rear wheels. Like the old G, the motor was mounted on the rear, and the blade sits behind the front wheels mounted to a small 3-pt. hitch fabricated by Anderson. This coming year, he plans to adapt a Sears lawn mower to mount on the 3-pt.

Luck played a role in Anderson building his most unique tractor. A friend gave him an old International Harvester engine his family had used in the 1940's. After getting it cleaned up and running, Anderson realized it closely resembled the engine of the Mogul 8-16 that his grandfather bought new in 1917.

"It had the valves on the same side and the rocker arms exposed the same way. The transmission was on the left and the magneto on the right," says Anderson. "I also had some old horse drawn implement wheels that were similar to the Mogul's. The pump was 48 percent scale and the wheels were 45 percent, so I did the tractor at about 45 percent scale."

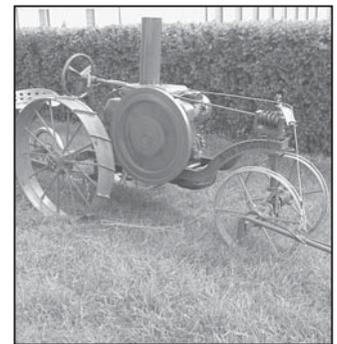
Like the original, Anderson fashioned a friction drive from the engine pulley back to the rear wheel, driving only one wheel rather than fabricating a differential. The steering mechanism was a worm gear and wheel used to turn the blower on a threshing machine. Anderson simply put a longer rod on it. He also put a short false pipe on the water jacket in imitation of the Mogul.

The biggest challenge for him was the curved frame on the original. Anderson cut slices from one leg of a length of angle iron, bent it and welded it solid.

As a final touch, Anderson added a furrow guide. He recalled his grandfather telling him he would get the tractor started and get off, letting the furrow guide attachment steer the tractor down the field. He would walk along side the slow tractor, tossing stones into a stone boat attached behind the plow.

Instead of pulling a plow, Anderson attached a small cart he can sit in while driving the tractor. Like the original, it only travels about 2 1/2 mph.

A few of Anderson's pint-size tractors are shown below.



"The steel wheels clatter along on pavement like an old tractor would," says Anderson. "I've entered it in a few slow-races, where the operator has to crank start a tractor and drive to the finish line. I just spin the

flywheel and go."

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Passing Knowledge Down To Your Kids

"My father died 12 years ago, just about the time I could have used his advice the most," says Andy Gheen, Athol, N.Y. "I had just retired from the Coast Guard and bought an 1830's homestead in the Adirondack mountains.

"As I was grieving his loss, I frantically tried to recall the advice and safety tips he had patiently shared with my brothers and me when we were growing up.

"After realizing how much I had forgotten, I decided I was going to leave my kids something to help them through tough times. I decided to set down all kinds of practical ideas like dropping a tree with a saw, cooking on a wood stove, gardening the old-fashioned way, raising chickens, and other general homesteading ideas.

"I made the book entertaining to read by making it read like an old-style almanac with lots of info in the margins and detailed

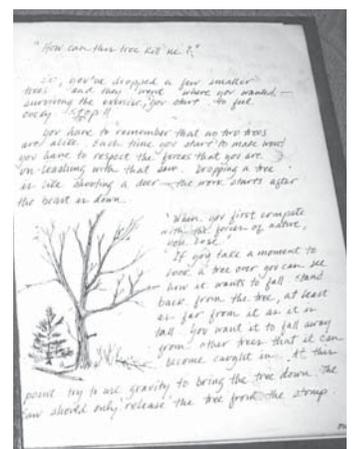
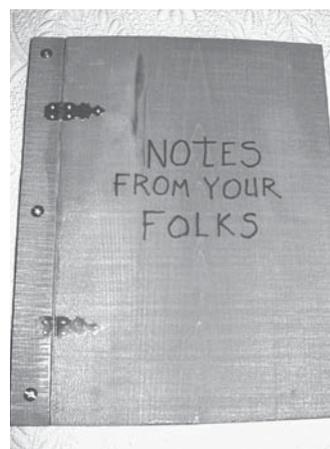
illustrations (I'm pretty good at drawing).

"This book will complement any 'how to' shelf of books because it contains everything I couldn't find in print. I figured if the ideas included have been good enough for generations of do-it-yourselfers in my family, it should be passed on. With this book, I figure my kids will be able to press on regardless of how crazy the world around them gets.

"After completing the book, I bound it between wood covers - thin sheets of lightweight wood that I sawed from basswood found on our own property. Screws bind the pages together and small brass hinges let the cover open and close easily.

"I'd be willing to sell xeroxed copies of this book if there's interest, minus the wood covers."

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Andy Gheen wanted to leave his kids with something to help them through tough times, so he set down all kinds of practical ideas in a book that he bound between wooden covers.