

## Powerful Garden Tractor Bucket

George Liskey, Buford, Ga., built a "bucket loader" for his Deere 317 garden tractor by converting a Deere model 43 front blade that he already had.

The bucket measures 43 in. wide and 18 in. tall and can lift 24 in. high. Capacity is 500 lbs. Liskey uses it on all 3 of his Deere 300 series garden tractors including a 318, 322, and 332.

"I built it because I got tired of moving dirt with a shovel and wheelbarrow," says Liskey. "Commercial bucket loaders sell for \$1,200 to \$1,500 and aren't built nearly as strong."

The bucket's bottom and sides were made by welding scrap 3/8-in. thick steel plate onto the blade.

The bucket mounts on the same frame that originally supported the blade. It's tilted up and down by a 2 1/2-in. dia. cylinder. Liskey added a pair of 2 1/2-in. dia. lift cylinders, which pin onto homemade vertical brackets that he welded to the frame.

The loader frame can be removed from the

tractor by removing two pins.

"It's like having a powered wheelbarrow with me wherever I go," says Liskey. "The 17 hp tractor has fluid in its lugged rear tires and 250 pounds of rear weight, so traction isn't a problem. It works fast. One time a neighbor had a tandem axle dump truck unload dirt in his yard, and I was able to level all of it for him in just one hour. I also use it to push over small trees, stumps, and clear brush, and I've used it to move sod and mulch for my son-in-law, who does subcontracting work for a home builder."

Liskey says the 2 1/2-in. dia. lift cylinders are probably overkill, but he was able to get them relatively cheap. "The cylinders have enough power for the bucket to force the tractor's rear wheels off the ground. Deere's 300 series tractors have two hydraulic sets in front, which allows me to use a double action cylinder on each one."

He recently decided he needed a bucket that would lift even higher so he built one that will lift 36 in. high. "I mounted it on my



George Liskey converted a Deere model 43 front blade into this "bucket loader". Bucket's bottom and sides were made by welding 3/8-in. thick steel plate onto blade.

Deere 332 16 hp diesel tractor and built an underframe for the loader that eliminates any stress on the tractor frame. I'm able to cut grass without having to remove the bucket," he notes.

Liskey says he's looking for a manufac-

turer. He expects the unit could be sold for \$1,500 to \$1,800.

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## He Built A Loader For His Roper Garden Tractor

"It works amazingly well - I don't know what I'd do without it," says Russell Wright, Hays, Alberta, who converted an old Roper garden tractor into a dandy loader tractor.

The tractor is equipped with a 42-in. wide bucket on front. He also built a set of log forks that bolt inside the bucket. The loader will lift 6 1/2 ft. high.

"Except for having a machine shop break the iron for the 42 by 12 by 12-in. bucket, I did all the fabricating in my shop," says Wright.

He started with an old Roper lawn tractor that he got free from a neighbor. The Briggs & Stratton 11 hp gas engine was worn out so he replaced it with a Honda 13 hp engine. To make the engine fit he had to lengthen the tractor by 6 in.

He used rectangular tubing to build the loader arms and 1/8-in. thick steel to build the bucket. The detachable arms are held in

place by four bolts. The cutting blade on the bucket was made from 1/4-in. thick by 3-in. wide flat plate iron sharpened to an edge.

A belt-driven 28 gpm hydraulic pump on one side of the tractor is used to raise and lower the bucket and also to tilt it.

A 2-spool hydraulic control valve is used to operate the lift and tilt the bucket.

"I use it to remove snow from my driveway to haul logs for firewood, and to do landscaping work. It's fun to operate and easy to handle," says Wright. "The tractor is small enough that I can easily get into tight areas."

"The loader has a lift capacity of 300 lbs., but I've lifted logs weighing 400 to 500 lbs. I'm amazed at how much it can lift. I have to be careful that I don't bend the tractor's front axle. The hydraulic pump has an electric clutch, so whenever I'm not using it I switch the pump off to keep from overworking the engine."



Russell Wright converted an old Roper garden tractor into a dandy loader tractor. A belt-driven hydraulic pump on one side of tractor is used to raise and lower the bucket and also to tilt it.

Wright built the loader last fall and says the entire project took a little more than two months to complete. "It cost a little more than I thought it would," he says. "My total cost was about \$2,200. I don't live close to a scrap yard so I had to buy all the iron required for the project. I also had to buy the three hy-

draulic cylinders, hoses and fittings. I already had the hydraulic pump and controls."

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## Mini Loader For Garden Tractors Lifts 4 Ft. High

Robert LaBonte, Friendship, Tenn., built a mini front-end loader for his Deere L130 23-hp riding mower. It worked out so well that he recently began marketing the high-lift mini loader.

The Kelly Loader bucket can be raised up to 48 in. high - enough to load a pickup bed - and dumped. The bucket measures 40 in. wide, 13 in. deep, and 12 in. high. It's operated by three electric linear actuators that hook up directly to the tractor's battery. The actuators are used to do both the lifting and the dumping and have a lift capacity of up to 500 lbs.

The loader frame is made from 1 by 2-in. rectangular tubing and attaches to the tractor's frame with four 3/8-in. bolts. A multi-axis joystick control, located next to the steering column, operates the lift and the power dump simultaneously.

"It's a universal setup that bolts onto any type of riding mower or garden tractor," says LaBonte. "It comes in handy for a variety of jobs that would otherwise have to be performed by a large tractor. Some examples are to clean out livestock trailers and barn stalls, to remove snow from driveways, to scrape and spread gravel, and to load a pickup or trailer.

"I built it because I couldn't find anything on the market that would lift high enough. I spent about 1 1/2 years researching the idea and went through several designs before I was finally able to work it all out. The reason it works is that in recent years linear actuators have become much more efficient and can deliver a lot more force. The actuators I use exert 600 lbs. of force to keep within the limitations of the tractor's frame.

"The loader can be attached or detached in about five minutes. Some drilling in the tractor's frame may be required. The loader's mounting brackets don't interfere with a belly-mounted mower, so you don't have to remove the mower to use the loader," says LaBonte.

An optional set of toothbars can be bolted onto the bucket for breaking up hard ground.

The Kelly Loader sells for \$1,400 plus S&H. A hydraulic-operated loader that operates off the tractor pto is also available and sells for \$1,700.

LaBonte also recently came out with a 3-pt. hitch for garden tractors that's also controlled by a linear actuator. The Kelly Quick Hitch is a universal setup equipped with a

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receiver hitch. It has a lift capacity of 500 lbs. and is operated by a self-centering toggle switch that mounts on the tractor's dash.

The Quick Hitch sells for \$450 plus S&H.

He also offers a small self-leveling utility cart that hooks up to the hitch. The cart can be used to transport anything from tools to yard debris. Also, it can be used to add weight to the tractor when using the loader. The Kelly Caddy sells for \$200 plus S&H.

He plans to come out with other attach-

ments, including a pull-type trailer with an automatic dump, and a mini backhoe. For hunters, he plans to introduce a quick hitch and cart that mounts to the back of a 4-wheeler and can be lowered to the ground to load deer.

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