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 used it because I got tired of moving dirt with a shovel and wheelbarrow,” says Liskey. “Commercial bucket loaders sell for $2,000 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 un-load 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 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 manufacturer to build his bucket.

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 boast 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 11 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.

“IT’S a universal setup that bolts onto any type of riding mower or garden tractor,” says LaBonte. “It comes in handy for 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 stalls, to remove snow from driveways, to scrape and spread gravel, and to load a pickup or trailer.

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. It’s operated by three electric linear actuators that hook up directly to the tractor’s battery.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Robert R. LaBonte, 2567 Hwy. 189, Friendship, Tenn. 38034 (ph 731 345-9192; kellyproductsco@yahoo.com; www.kellyproductsinc.com).

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

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Russell K. Wright, P. O. Box 42, Hays, Alberta, Canada T0K 1B0 (ph 403 725-3799; arent@telus.net).

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