

## “Chopped” Deere A Has A Cotton Picker Axle

After a career spent repairing Harley Davidson motorcycles and “chopping” them for fun, Jim Colsch decided to chop his Deere A. It now sports a wide front end from a cotton picker, tie rods and a steering arm from old cars, and a head and other gear from an LP-powered Deere 60.

“I needed a wide front end, and I had one my dad had picked up somewhere. At the time, I had no idea it was from a cotton picker,” says Colsch. “I added the LP head because LP pistons are ½ in. taller than gas engine pistons, and that gives it more compression for more power.”

A long time puller with plenty of trophies, Colsch’s goal was to produce a tractor that would catch the eye and have plenty of traction and power.

His chopped A is about 6 in. shorter in length. Cutting the frame and welding it back together was the easy part, even if it did mean cutting and welding in a step pattern for strength. Of course shortening the frame also meant trimming the steering shaft, the fan shaft, hood, and other parts that were now too long.

Putting the LP head from the Model 60 on the Model A block was easy, as the bore and stroke are the same and they share a common bolt pattern. The rest of it got interesting. The top of the head was larger than the A, so two 11-in. long, 1/2-in. wide strips had to be ground away from the frame before the head could be slipped into place. Increased power didn’t start and stop with the pistons. The dual carburetor on the 60 head and the LP intake manifold increase cold air intake for increased condensed charge in the cylinders. Adding the LP exhaust manifold also

enhanced exhaust flow. Of course there wasn’t room for either manifold the way they were, so each had to be modified to fit the new space.

“The air manifold on the 60 normally points up, but with the fan shaft shortened, I had to turn it down and fit a filter onto it,” says Colsch. “I also shortened the inner and outer shaft of the governor.”

He had retained the A radiator with its water pipes that were slightly smaller than the outlet from the 60 head. Not only did the original pipe have to be shortened, but also conversion necks had to be fabricated with the pipe welded back into place.

Other bits of plumbing and brackets had to be reconfigured as well. Colsch made new brackets for the fuel tank. He also installed the 60 governor housing in case he wanted live hydraulics at some point.

If he was going to turn the A into a puller, Colsch knew he needed a sturdy wide front end. He first strengthened the cotton picker axle by inserting a 1 by 3-in. piece of steel the length of the axle, welding it to the axle top and bottom.

“When the front end pops up in the air and then slams back on the ground, I didn’t want a bent axle,” says Colsch.

He used a cement saw with a metal blade to saw off the original trike pedestal and built new angle iron brackets to attach the cotton picker axle.

Colsch retained only the top 6 in. of original down shaft. He grafted a 1-in. extension to it, that runs down through a pillow block bearing where it joins a piece of shaft from a Corvair steering sector. It then tied into Cheveller tie rods. The taper was the same as the Corvair, so they fit



Jim Colsch decided to “chop” his Deere A tractor. It now sports a wide front end from a cotton picker, and tie rods and a steering arm from old cars.

well together.

The cotton picker axle had about the same hub and bolt pattern as the original A, so the front wheels look near stock. It is the rear wheels where Colsch again got creative.

The rear axle had the stock Deere flange used with pressed steel wheels. He searched for a pair of centers that would fit the 9-bolt pattern. He finally found a set from an Oliver that would take the 26-in. New Holland combine rims he wanted for pulling. Weight brackets front and rear finished off the tractor.

“It was one of the most fun projects I’ve ever done,” says Colsch. “I’ll use it in parades and pull in exhibition class, as most pulls won’t have a class for a chopped A



The head is off an LP-powered Deere 60.

with 26-in. tires. And if someone has really deep pockets, I might sell it and chop another one.”

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jim Colsch, 22092 County 19, Spring Grove, Minn. 55974 (ph 507 498-3738).

## Battery-Powered Drill Powers Garden Tiller

If your garden is in a permanent well-tilled spot, Eliot Coleman’s shallow tilling tool might be just what you need. It mixes up the top 2 in. of soil to create a perfect seedbed. What makes it unique is that it’s powered by a battery-operated electric drill.

“I take all plant material off the beds at the end of the season and compost it,” explains Coleman. “I wanted something to mix compost and soil amendments back into the top layer of the bed while breaking up the roots from the previous crop. With permanent beds like the ones we use, all deep tilling would do is bring up weed seeds.”

Coleman realized he needed a lightweight, powered tiller that would fit his permanent, 30-in. bed planting style.

“The small, powered cultivators weren’t built well enough, and the well-built ones were too big.”

With the help of Art Haines, a former robotics engineer, Coleman designed the housing out of heavy-duty stainless steel and aluminum. An apron on the back spreads the tilled soil out and helps the unit float at the 2-in. level. Installing the drill is as simple as tightening down the chuck on the drive shaft. The shaft drives the upper sprocket of the simple chain drive on one side of the tiller. The side drive ensures that the 6 staggered steel tines can till across the full 15-in. working width.

The narrow width also kept the tiller weight down to an easy-to-handle 22 lbs. To turn the tiller on or off, a rope tied to the opposite side of the housing from the drive is run under the drill and up past the trigger.



Eliot Coleman’s garden tiller is powered by a battery-operated electric drill.



It then doubles back slightly and through a hole in the housing above the drill. From there it extends up to the handlebars. Pulling on the rope tightens the trigger, engaging the drive. To stop the tiller, all Coleman has to do is release the tension on the rope.

Oiled ash handles give it a classic look with easy handling. Handles can be offset to allow the operator to walk alongside the bed.

The tiller retails for \$299 and is marketed primarily through Johnny’s Selected Seeds.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Johnny’s Selected Seeds, 955 Benton Ave., Winslow, Maine 04901 (ph 207 861-3999; or 877 564-6697; www.johnnyseeds.com).

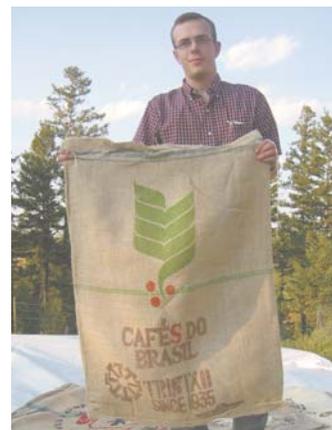
## Coffee Bags Are The New Burlap

Burlap bags used to be everywhere but it’s hard to find them today. Jared Kuiper has an alternative. The Kamloops, B.C., farmer contracts with a coffee roaster to buy coffee bean bags, cleans them up, and then resells them.

The bags measure 40 in. long by 28 in. wide and are made of 100 percent organic jute fiber. They come in 6 different kinds of weaves depending on the weight of the fabric, but any of the bags can hold 150 lbs. or more.

“These bags have many uses around the farm,” says Kuiper. “They work great for storing produce, greasy shop parts, feed, grain, and just about anything else you can think of. Some people use them to make clothes, aprons, vests, tote bags, or even cushions. Others use them to make crafts or to make wall hangings or as a boot mat for the shop or mudroom.

“They make excellent game bags for fishermen and hunters. Target shooters stuff them with hay or plastic bags to produce a long lasting target, as the weaves allow the bullet to pass through without much damage. The bags can also be used for shipping and packaging.”



Kuiper with one of his coffee bags.

The bags sell for \$2.50 apiece plus S&H, with discounts for orders of 25 or more.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jared Kuiper, 514 Robbins Range Road, Kamloops, B.C., Canada V2C 6W1 (ph 250 371-4519; jared.kuiper@gmail.com; www.burlapbarn.com).

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