



The first annual Garden Tractor Jamboree, was held on Andy and Lisa Hinrichs' farm last year. Attendees who bring their garden tractors get in free.

Lawn Mower Catapult Creates Fun At Tractor Show

When Andy and Lisa Hinrichs held their first annual Garden Tractor Jamboree on their Illinois farm last year, nothing created more fun and excitement than the "Tractor-Pult" they used to catapult lawn mowers up to 75 ft. through the air. "People love to watch destruction as long as no one gets hurt," Hinrichs laughs.

The idea for the Tractor-Pult came from hearing about the popular pumpkin chucking contests held around Halloween each year.

Hinrichs and his friend, Duane Napper, first built a small model and then used old county plow trucks springs to build a full-size model. He and his friends spent a few Sundays testing it before the show. Stripped down MTD garden tractors didn't go very far, but stripped push mowers sailed about 75 ft. before landing. At the show, the crowd responded the best to bowling balls pelting a stack of mowers.

The Hinrichs started collecting garden



Photo shows push mower being launched 75 ft. by trailer-mounted catapult. The crowd also loved seeing bowling balls pelting a stack of junked mowers.

tractors 10 years ago. After turning their barn into a mini museum to house their collection, they decided to launch their own show for other garden tractor collectors.

This year's show will be held May 14th. There will be acreage available for plowing and disking and plenty of room to display hundreds of tractors and hundreds of visitors.

Hinrichs notes that people collect garden tractors because they are small and require less room. It's also a less expensive hobby

than collecting full size tractors. People who bring garden tractors get in free. There is a \$5 admission for others. Registration forms for the event are on their website.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Andy and Lisa Hinrichs, Hinrichs Custom Woodworking, 1675 S. Columbian Rd., Oregon, Ill. 61061 (ph 815 732-6551; www.hinrichscustomwoodworking.com).



Tractor mirrors consists of a 1/8-in. thick glass mirror, set inside a replica tractor grille shell made of ABS plastic.

Eye-Catching "Tractor Mirrors"

"People really get a kick out of them. They're definitely unique," says Dave Krueger, Mulino, Ore., about his authentic tractor grille mirrors.

The mirrors were on display at the recent Northwest Ag Expo in Portland, Ore. The 1/8-in. thick glass mirror is set inside a replicated tractor grille shell made of ABS plastic. The grille shell is the exact same color and size as the original tractor and includes a reproduction of the tractor's original emblem.

Krueger offers 3 tractor models so far: a 1947-1952 Ford 8N grille; a 1953 Ford Golden Jubilee; and a 1954 Ford NAA which is identical to the Golden Jubilee except for the emblem. He also plans to soon offer a 1932 Ford car mirror. Each of the tractor models sells for \$250 plus S&H.

A Deere GPO wooden mock-up was also on display at the show, but is not for sale.

"The Ford tractor grille mirrors are authentic down to the hole at the bottom for the tractor's starting crank," says Krueger. "The colors match the original tractor. Because of the ABS resin that's used, the color goes all the way through the material. There's no paint involved so there's no concern with chipping, cracking, or peeling.

"The emblems I use are an exact reproduction of the original Ford emblems, and are the same emblems you'd use if you were restoring the tractor. The grille shells look so realistic that some people believe I must be using the actual front end of a tractor, restoring and repainting it. They don't like the idea that I might be robbing parts from antique tractors. However, I don't use any

sheet metal parts at all."

Krueger says he made the 1935 Deere GPO wooden mock-up for display only and has no plans to offer it for sale. "I replicated the Deere name for this display model, which I cannot sell. There are tight guidelines in regard to reproducing and selling anything that's copyrighted or patented. I'm not replicating the Ford emblems; I'm purchasing them. I can't even consider production without first working through Deere."

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Tractor-shaped bed is built for a twin mattress and made entirely of wood painted Deere green and yellow.

Sporty "Tractor Bed"

"My 2-year-old son's love for tractors inspired me to build him a tractor bed for Christmas," says Robert Vander Ploeg II, Ada, Mich.

The tractor-shaped bed is built for a twin mattress with box spring and is made entirely of wood painted Deere green and yellow. Vander Ploeg built the bed in pieces and then put it together in his son's bedroom in a corner of his log cabin house. The cab, sides and wheels are separate from the frame. All bed components are either glued or screwed together.

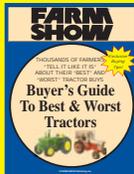
A carpenter by trade, Vander Ploeg says the tractor bed took about 100 hrs. to make.

"I used a variety of different saws to cut the wood. I didn't make any drawings - it all came from my head. I tried to include as much detail as I could. For example, there's a 'manifold' on each side of the engine, and the rear tractor wheels have lugs on them made from scraps of wood."

Vander Ploeg says he's willing to build tractor beds for others. "The price ranges from \$1,000 to \$6,000 depending on the amount of detail," he notes.

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