



Half-size 1938 Deere A is powered by three 12-volt deep charge batteries. But thanks to an on-board recording, the mini tractor sounds like a full-sized Deere.

Electric Deere Is Totally Green

Myron Kinney likes to tell folks that his half-size 1938 Deere A is truly "green" because it's powered by three 12-volt deep charge batteries. But thanks to a recording and some electronics mounted on the tractor, the mini tractor still sounds like a Deere.

"I had an interest in tractors and just decided to build it," he says. "It uses batteries, because I hadn't seen anyone do that."

Kinney grew up on a farm that had two Deere A tractors. He made his half-size tractor with one wheel, a less common model, mostly because it was easier.

The tractor is a conglomeration of parts: a Cub Cadet transmission and rear end, an automotive radiator, wheels from a 6600 Deere combine with spokes from an iron wheel wagon, a Deering cast iron seat, a golf cart gearbox, bed frame angle iron, and a metal table pedestal for the front column on the tractor.

The reverse didn't work in the golf cart gearbox, but the transmission fixed that. Setting up the steering was a little trickier.

"When I turned left, it went right," Kinney says, explaining he couldn't fit the gearbox in the right direction. He solved the problem by adding a hydraulic pump from a hydrostat combine. With two gears, it reversed the steering to make it right.

The other challenge was the sound. Kinney admits he spent nearly as much time and money recording and setting up a sound system as he did restoring the tractor.

It was worth it, however. He loves the look on kids' faces when he takes the tractor to events and has them "start" the tractor and they hear the Deere two-cylinder pop.

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Orville Schraeder mounted a stationary Witte engine on his Deere B tractor. Homemade flywheel pulley replaces tractor's flywheel.

Witte Engine Repowers John Deere B

Orville Schraeder's Witte engine-powered Deere B tractor gets lots of attention when he drives it in parades. The stationary engine mounted on the old B really stands out. Start it up, and the single cylinder grabs even more attention.

"It gets a lot of looks when it starts barking," says Schraeder. "It has a throttle governor so it backs off when the engine gets up to speed."

Schraeder had fixed up the Witte engine, but with its double flywheels and pressed steel frame, it was too heavy to move around easily. Replacing a frozen engine on the B with the Witte solved two problems.

"I kept everything on the B up to the transmission," recalls Schraeder. "I sealed the transmission to hold the oil and had a fly-

wheel pulley made to replace the B flywheel. A reverse belt drive connects the pulley on the engine to the pulley on the B flywheel."

One of the advantages of the B is its battery-powered starter. Schraeder is able to start the Witte with it.

"If the battery is charged up, it starts pretty good," he says.

A machinist nephew made the flywheel pulley for Schraeder. Other than that, the biggest complication was simply leveling the Witte. The frame had about a 2-in. drop from one end to the other. Schraeder used channel iron to level it.

"The main challenge was lining everything up for the belt and getting it to the right length," says Schraeder.

The repowered 7 hp Witte/B travels at

Silo Tractor Now A Local Landmark

By Lorn Manthey

"People don't know whether to call it a driving distraction or a tourist attraction," Paul Martin says about the tractor he mounted on top of a 30-ft. silo. "I did it because I like to have fun, and it certainly provided that."

Martin, a Grove City, Minn. farmer who enjoys old tractors and practical jokes, completed the whole project in 6 days back in 2002.

"My silo had been empty for quite awhile and my neighbor had an old B Deere sitting in his pasture. I bought it for a couple hundred bucks, and he warned me the motor was froze tight," Martin said. "I told him that was just fine, because I'm just gonna perch it on top of my silo anyhow."

When Martin got the old Deere home he gave it a good paint job. "It had to look like a nice tractor so more people would think I was absolutely crazy for putting something that nice up there," Martin says.

Next he called his friend Curtis Wendt, who owned a large crane used for dismantling grain bins. "I told him what I needed help with and I think he laughed for 10 min.," Martin said. But a few days later, Wendt and the crane arrived as planned.

In the meantime, Martin located a large metal lid from a fertilizer tank to serve as the tractor platform. "I needed something round, and the cover was 12 ft. in diameter and 1/2 in. thick," Martin says. "It was definitely the right idea, except the lid was two feet smaller than my 14-ft. silo. We had to improvise by welding metal arms on 4 sides to clamp over the staves."

After the platform was completed, the tractor was positioned in the center and chained in place. Wendt used the crane to remove the old roof from the silo, then lifted the tractor and the circular support platform onto the top row of staves. The silo tractor stands in Martin's farmyard about 400 ft. south of Highway 12, a busy road that runs from Minneapolis west to South Dakota. The landmark is easily visible as cars travel east or west.

"The fun started the first day it was up there," Martin says. "We watched cars slowing down and pointing. Many drivers stop and take pictures. Over the years we've



"People stop and take pictures of my silo tractor year around," says Paul Martin of Grove City, Minn. His nicely painted Deere B sits on top of a 30 ft. tall silo just 400 feet from a highway.

probably had 50 or more people drive in the yard and ask why it's up there, and how I got it there.

"A few years ago my dad was in the VA hospital in St. Paul and he was talking to a guy from Iowa," Martin says. "Dad said he was from Grove City, and the Iowan asked if he knew the crazy farmer who had a tractor on his silo. Dad was a bit embarrassed to admit that the 'crazy farmer' was his son."

"This landmark has created more laughs and excitement over the years than a barrel of monkeys," Martin says. "For a few hundred bucks we've been entertained for years."

The silo tractor is located on U.S. Highway 12 at mile marker 94, east of Grove City, Minn.

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A reverse belt drive connects engine-mounted pulley to pulley on tractor's flywheel.

about the same speed as it did with its original 14 hp Deere engine. Schraeder says it will take off in 6th gear from a standstill.

"It has good torque," he says. "It would do a good job powering a corn cutter for silage

or a saw rig."

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