Riding Mower Converted To Self-Propelled Splitter

"It lets me drive the splitter to the wood instead of having to move the wood to the splitter," says Andrew Youngblood, Eau Claire, Mich., about his 3-wheeled, self-propelled log splitter. He and his wife Kara inherited the splitter from Kara's father Keith Griffin, who built the rig using parts from an old White riding mower and a pickup.

"Keith passed away in 2010, and ever since I've wanted to honor him by putting this story in FARM SHOW," says Youngblood. "He was an amazing man and is greatly missed. "The splitter had sat idle for 3 years. I got it out on a recent weekend and cleaned it up and got it running again."

The self-propelled wood handler is powered by a 12 1/2 hp gas engine salvaged from an old White riding mower. The engine direct-drives a hydraulic pump that drives the rear end off an old Ford pickup. The pump also operates a 5-in. hydraulic cylinder that drives the splitting wedge, and a crane fitted with tongs that are used to lift heavy chunks onto the splitter table. Cable runs from the arm down to a hydraulic motor-powered spool mounted under a horizontal arm. The crane can be spun all the way around and, by pulling a couple of pins, can be folded flat for transport.

The splitting table mounts on a 10-in. wide by 9-ft. long H-beam that's bolted to a cross member via a pair of metal adapter plates. The cross member is bolted to a pair of steel uprights that are welded onto the pickup axle. The splitter wedge is a 12-in. wide, 1-in. thick steel plate welded on edge to the cylinder. The push plate is made from a 1 3/4-in. steel plate.

The single caster wheel on back is off an old pull-type brush mower, and the seat is off the riding mower. A horizontal tiller on back provides directional steering, and an upright lever is used to go forward or reverse. There's also a dash with a cluster of gauges on back.

"It lets us get the job done fast," says Youngblood. "It'll split a 31-in. long log. I don't know how fast it'll go because I never clocked it, but it scoots right along. An adjustable metal stand on front of the unit converts into a hitch so the splitter can be pulled down the road. I pull a pin to slip the rear-mounted caster wheel out of the way, and then disengage a hydraulic motor so that the drive system freewheels."

The splitter's 2 drive wheels are fitted with the wheel rims and hubcaps off a 1970's Ford Mustang. "Many of the hydraulic components are off an old cherry shaking machine," notes Youngblood.

Andrew Youngblood's 3-wheeled, self-propelled splitter is equipped with a crane fitted with tongs, which are used to lift heavy chunks onto the splitter table.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Andrew Youngblood, 5611 M-140, Eau Claire, Mich. 49111 (ph 269 921-7090).

Deere 4020 Fitted With New Steps

"The steps on Deere 20 series tractors are too high for almost anyone to use comfortably so I added a couple that make it much safer to climb on and off the tractor," says Roger Keller, Pomeroy, Ohio, who attached new steps to both his Deere 4020 and 3020 tractors.

He replaced the tractor's single step with two larger, nonskid steps. Each step is made from expanded metal or sections of steel grate supported by an angle iron bracket, which bolts onto the tractor using the original bolt holes. The top step is 16 in. long by 9 1/2 in. wide and the bottom step is 12 in. long by 9 1/2 in. wide. Two vertical flat straps run from the sides of the top step down to the bottom step.

"I've built the steps for six other local farmers who own Deere 20 series tractors. They all say they don't know how they ever got along without them," says Keller.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Roger Keller, 34856 St. Rt. 7, Pomeroy, Ohio 45769 (ph 740 985-4434).

Roger Keller replaced his Deere tractor's single step with two larger, nonskid steps.

Willie Albrecht uses this stove to burn soybean bales. Hot water is piped into his shop's in-floor heating system.

Soybean Bales Heat Farm Shop

Thanks to his new bale-burning stove, Willie Albrecht's 130 by 50-ft. farm shop has been shirtsleeve comfortable this winter. Plus he doesn't have to worry about expensive propane bills because he burns something he has plenty of – soybean residue. Last fall, he baled residue on 150 of his 800 acres of soybean fields and got about 400, 4 by 5-ft. round bales.

They burn well – about 1 1/4 bales per day average – in the outdoor stove Albrecht designed. He hired a fabrication shop to roll an 8-ft. dia. steel barrel and cut out other parts with a CNC plasma cutter. Albrecht and his family welded everything together themselves.

Cold water comes in from the back and goes through 12 pipes in metal heat shields in the 6-in. space between the burn chamber and the exterior aluminum sheeting. The water goes through a flexible hose to the front of the door (to keep it from warping), back into the stove through 24 3/4-in. schedule 80 pipes that are loosely secured on angle iron and hangars to the top radius of the stove so that they can contract and expand.

He installed the pipes, the firebricks and other parts so that they can easily be replaced.

"I borrowed ideas from my dad and brother's outdoor and indoor woodstoves," Albrecht says. "Outdoor stoves go down in efficiency after the first year. I put the pipes in so we can clean them out or replace them if they rust out."

The grate is made out of pieces of bucket cutting edge that can also be replaced. An electric motor runs the 4-in. auger at the bottom of the stove that moves the ashes out through the ash door.

The system holds 175 gal. of water circulated by a 1/3 hp water pump that moves 50 gpm. Albrecht uses a 50/50 water/antifreeze mix to keep the corrosion down and in case the power goes out.

The water goes through 250 ft. of line to the shop, which has in-floor heating in a new addition and a radiator and fan in the original 50 by 50-ft. shop. The new stove and total setup cost less than $14,000 and uses about 8 amps ($70) of electricity/month.

"The stove is overkill for our use. We could add more buildings and a house," Albrecht says. "This would be ideal for dairies to heat buildings and water efficiently."

Too much soybean trash has been a problem. Baling the majority of it leaves some residue for the soil and makes planting and cultivation easier. Though he's sold some bales for a windbreak, there isn't a market for baled soybean residue in the area, he says.

So far, Albrecht has been pleased with how well it works for fuel. The soybean bales have a pleasant smell and produce very little smoke. His stove also burns other cheap and free fuel sources such as cornstalk bales, wood and old pallets.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Willie Albrecht, R381 East Townline Rd., Athens, Wis. 54411 (ph 715 297-2323).

Stopping Grain Loss From Cart Augers

"We fold the auger down on our grain cart after each dump so we won't hit a tree limb or power pole while driving back to the combine. The problem is that every time we lay the auger down, we lose some grain on the ground. So after loading several trucks in the same place, you have a mess of wasted grain on the ground afterwards," says Max Robinson, Marysville, Ohio.

"To solve the problem, I took the boot off an old grain bin and made brackets to mount it under the auger on the cart. A piece of 4-in. drain tile runs down under the boot. Grain is held in the length of tile until it's full. In a day of harvesting I often catch 4 to 6 gal. of corn in a pail."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Max E. Robinson, 22669 State Route 4, Marysville, Ohio 43040 (ph 937 642-1132).

Grain spilling out of folded-down auger falls into boot and is held in a piece of drain tile below.