Side-Mounted Garage Door Opener Frees Up Space

Dan Eagleton came up with a way to get more overhead room in his garage by converting the garage door opener into a side-mounted one.

"The entire project took just 1 1/2 hrs. to do, and after many years of use it's still working flawlessly," says Eagleton. "I've worn out two door openers but never had a problem mechanically. The idea works so well that I don't know why all garage door openers aren't side-mounted. They're easier to install and require fewer parts, and therefore less maintenance."

He got the idea soon after he built a large new shop equipped with an overhead door. "Before I was even able to get the door installed, my son had a basketball hoop up inside the garage and every kid in the area was playing basketball there. Unfortunately, once I got the door and opener installed it blocked the basketball backboard and hoop. Needless to say, I wasn't very popular.

"One day I was looking at the door opener and came up with an idea. I took the opener and all the hardware down and mounted the opener on one of the door rails, about 1 ft. from a 1-in. dia. shaft that holds the door springs. The opener's chain was the same size as a bicycle chain, so I bought a new sprocket hub with a 1-in. dia. hole and a set screw on it. I found an old rear wheel bicycle sprocket and welded it to the hub, then slid the hub over the shaft and installed a 2-ft. length of bicycle chain with a master link."

The only limitation to his side-mounted garage door opener, says Eagleton, is that there's no release rope to lift the door manually. "If the power ever goes off, I would have to release the set screw on the hub in order to open the door. But I've never had to do that."

There are side-mounted garage door openers on the market as well as conversion kits to side-mount any conventional overhead opener.

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Needing more overhead room in his garage, Dan Eagleton converted the garage door opener into a side-mounted one.

Screens Protect Tractor Cab Windows

Robert Conquest of Halstead, Kansas, recently sent FARM SHOW photos of tractors equipped with the screens he builds to protect tractor cab windows and the tractor operator.

A few years ago Conquest, a retired AGCO welder, built a screen for his neighbor, Terry Jacob (Vol. 39, No. 4). Jacobs received several calls from farmers across the country about the screens, which he passed on to Conquest, who decided to go into business. He has already made screens for Deere and Massey Ferguson tractors, and is now working on a design for Kubotas.

The photos show screens he built for a Deere 5110 tractor and for a Deere 7220. Both screens are made from expanded metal and sit above the fenders and behind the cab window (the screen on the 7220 also extends forward to protect the cab's side windows). The screens will block anything big enough to break the glass while not interfering with the rear view.

"I custom-build each screen to fit the tractor model," says Conquest. "The screens are mounted on a framework of 1-in. steel tubing. Brackets mounted to each fender allow the screen to pivot into place or down for cleaning or opening the window. Rubber latches lock down on a hook on each bracket to lock the screen in the upright position."

He's especially proud of how "squeak-free" his screens are. "All the screens I make are mounted on 1-in. thick rubber mounts so there are no distracting rattling or squeaking sounds."

He says the owner of the Deere 7220 has a side-mounted, hydraulic-operated mower. "He uses the mower to clear small trees on 10 acres of idle land, and it throws out chunks of wood. The screen bolts in place using existing holes on both sides of the cab," says Conquest.

To make the screens he often has to be creative. For example, one time he got a call from a Wyoming rancher who wanted a screen for his Deere 6140. "To get started, I went to a neighbor who had a similar 6130 model and took measurements. Then I called the 6140 owner back to verify and made some adjustments.

"The rancher said he needed to mow some timothy grass, which he sells to zoos to feed elephants," says Conquest. "His land is very rocky and since he uses a big New Holland 30-ft. Hydro-Swing mower, flying rocks can be a real problem on both sides of his cab as well as the back. He says it costs about $500 to replace the rear window and $1,500 apiece to replace the radius side windows. So I made a screen that protects both the rear and side windows and shipped it to him."

Standard screens are designed to protect tractor cab rear windows. Screen shown here, custom built for a Deere 7220, also extends forward to protect side windows.

Conquest ships his screens on a 4-ft. long wooden skid. He says the price will vary depending on the customer's needs, but generally is less than $1,000 including shipping.

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Trailer Light Kit Keeps Jeep Going

Anyone who's ever had their vehicle rear ended will be interested in how Glenn Haley, Andover, N.H., used a trailer light kit to keep his wife's Jeep going temporarily until the damaged area could be repaired at a body shop.

"I call it my 'plug and play' tail/brake light," says Haley. "The right side of the Jeep was rear ended early last May, damaging the body and also breaking the tail light and brake light on that side. My wife needed the vehicle for her job so she couldn't wait 3 weeks until the body shop could repair the damage.

"The Jeep has a receiver hitch and trailer light plug on it, and I already had a trailer light kit to use with our 20-ft. trailer."

Haley bolted together lengths of metal shelf brackets to make an L-shaped frame that fits into the Jeep's hitch. A short length of square tubing with a hole drilled into it connects to the receiver hitch. The vertical part of the bracket is reinforced by a short length of plumber strapping that's bolted to an existing hole on the Jeep. He used 2 studs on back of the tail light to secure the strapping to the top of the bracket. He also coiled up the trailer kit wire and zip tied it to the bracket.

When his wife's Jeep got rear ended, Glenn Haley used a trailer light kit to keep the vehicle going until the damaged area could be repaired.

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Perforated metal hanger straps are cut into 1-in. wide strips and then placed over wire. A cordless drill is used to drive screws through holes in straps.

He Attaches Staples With A Cordless Drill

After he got tired of trying to drive staples into some iron-hard hedge posts in his fence lines, Steve Atkinson, Salisbury, Mo., came up with a much easier way. He uses perforated metal hanger straps, screws, and a cordless drill.

The straps are about 1 in. wide and thin enough that they can be easily bent. Atkinson uses a tin snips to cut 3-in. lengths, leaving a small hole near each end. He places the straps over wire and against the post, then runs 1 1/2-in. screws through the holes placing one screw on each side of the wire.

"It works great. The screws go into the posts surprisingly well," says Atkinson.

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