

# “Right-Size” Equipment Built To Match Needs

With small farm equipment hard to find and expensive to buy, Ben and Emily Jackle prefer to “right-size” what’s available. With 12 of their 32 acres in organic certified specialty crops, they don’t need an 8-row planter, cultivator or transplanter. However, they’ve figured out how to cut down the toolbars and set aside extra components.

“Adapting large equipment bridges the gap between small and large-scale vegetable farming,” says Ben Jackle, Mile Creek Farm. “Instead of buying a large-scale tine weeder, we buy the spring-loaded tines and mount them to a homemade frame.”

Jackle advises never throwing away old 3-pt. hitches. He notes that they come in handy for mounting a tine weeder frame or other shop-made toolbars, such as his pre-bedder with 2 sets of disk blades set at an angle to rough out beds or a shaper pan to flatten them.

Large-scale equipment isn’t all that gets modified. Jackle really likes his old Allis Chalmers G for cultivation. However, rather than changing cultivator shanks, he modified

the G so he can easily swap out the toolbars.

“We have a whole series of toolbars with various cultivation tools on them,” says Jackle. “We also redesigned the old Planter Jr. from a belly mount to a 3-pt. frame with guide wheels to keep it in place on the bed. We still get the precision of the belly mount without the tight space for mounting it.”

Even small changes can save time and energy, adds Jackle. While he didn’t modify his used 10-ft. disc sections or hitch, he did make changes to the wing adjustor.

“I welded some nuts on the screw-type adjustor,” says Jackle. “They allow me to use a battery-powered impact wrench to adjust the wing angles.”

Jackle advises others to hack their own equipment. “Don’t be afraid to change things,” he says. “The way things become really useful is to make them easy to use.”

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Ben Jackle modified his Allis Chalmers G so he can easily swap out toolbars to match his needs. “We have a series of toolbars with various cultivation tools on them,” he says.



Bed-sized toolbar (left) is equipped with cultivators and a Covington side dresser. Photo above shows Jackle’s foot-powered dibbler.

## Japanese Mini Trucks Converted To UTV’s

If you’re looking for a less expensive utility vehicle to help with chores around your farm, hunting land, or lake property, check out Japanese mini trucks. They can be customized to meet your needs, says Wilson Hoover, who sells used, low-mileage trucks made from the 1990’s to now.

“I don’t sell them as on-road vehicles, though in some states they’re legal,” he says. “We go over them, service them and make sure they’re in good running condition. A lot of them have only about 20,000 miles on them. Sometimes they have dump boxes.”

If they don’t dump, he can add a kit to do that.

With 4-WD and just 4 ft. wide, they’re narrow enough to drive on trails with a handy 6-ft. long bed that carries a 900-lb. payload. With lights, wipers and fully enclosed cabs with heaters, the 45 hp., 3-cyl. trucks offer the

amenities of a regular truck, but with better mileage - 45 mpg.

To make them more useful, Hoover customizes them with 2 or 4-in. lift kits, depending on the model, and replaces the street tires with trail tires and aluminum wheels if the customer requests them.

“The bed is lower and the sides fold down to make a flatbed,” Hoover adds. That makes them versatile for many uses from hauling hay and feed to landscaping equipment or hunting gear.

When one customer wanted to use it to haul a feed bin with auger to feed cattle, Hoover installed a power inverter.

A hitch can be added to pull a small trailer or to mount a snowplow on front or back.

Depending on the truck’s age and customizing requests, cost is typically \$5,300 to \$10,000 for older models. New ones run



To make Japanese mini trucks more useful, Hoover customizes them with 2 or 4-in. lift kits, depending on the model, and replaces the street tires with trail tires.

about \$18,000.

Hoover can transport them on a trailer anywhere for an additional cost.

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Thomas Geer built this mini tractor-trailer on the frame of a Snapper garden tractor. Power is provided by a 2-cyl. Briggs & Stratton engine.



## Tractor Trailer Mini Rig

“I was inspired by a story in FARM SHOW’s Vol. 39, No. 2 about the mini tractor-trailer built by reader Wayne Metcalf,” says Thomas A. Geer, Sr., Jewell, N.Y.

“My mini semi is built on the frame of a Snapper LT 16001 garden tractor with a 2-cyl. Briggs & Stratton engine. I added a floating tag axle on back and made the body panels and doors from salvaged aluminum and fiberglass panels. The fenders were made from plastic barrels and I made the 5<sup>th</sup> wheel hitch from scratch.

“The home-built tri-axle trailer that I tow behind can haul a pretty good load, which often is my refurbished 1968 Struck MD40 mini dozer with a 6 1/2-hp. Honda engine.”

The truck is 8 ft. long and 40 in. wide while the trailer is 12 ft. long. There are more than 50 working lights on the truck and trailer including running lights, headlights, cab lights, and emergency flashers. There are also hand-built mirrors, a working air horn, and much more.

“We’ve taken this truck to many antique tractor shows. The operator is usually my 8-year-old grandson Cooper Dailey. His ear-to-ear smile while driving this one-of-a-kind truck makes all the work worth while.”

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