

Made It Myself

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Downsized Farmall "B" Makes "Perfect Lawn Mower"

David Bengtson, Pelican Rapids, Minn., mows his own 3-acre lawn and takes care of a neighbor's big lawn as well. To speed up the job he considered using his Farmall "B" and a big 60-in. mower deck, but the tractor was too big to get around the numerous trees and shrubs in the yards. He solved the problem by rebuilding the tractor so it's shorter and narrower and building brackets to belly-mount the big mower deck.

"It has more power and a cuts a wider swath than most conventional riding mowers and turns almost as short," says Bengtson.

The original tractor frame was built from cast iron tubing so it couldn't be shortened by using a cutting torch. Bengtson used angle iron to build a new frame that's 5 1/2 in. shorter. He unbolted a 22-in. length of axle from each side of the rear axle, then moved the wheel and hub assemblies in and bolted them back on. He replaced the original rear tires with 33-in. high, 12 1/2-in. wide tires off a pickup. He also reversed the wheels to make the tractor as wide as possible for maximum stability. Total width from wheel to wheel is 59 in. He shortened the front steering column 5 1/2

in. and mounted new 14-in. car spare tires on it.

The tractor pto belt-drives the mower deck which floats on four caster wheels.

"It's almost the perfect mowing machine," says Bengtson. "The tractor's original 113 cu. in. engine had a lot of hours on it so I replaced it with a 4-cyl., 22 hp engine off an old swather. The new engine runs faster with more power than the original one. The tractor's small rear tires slow down the transmission gear ratio so that I can do most of my mowing in second gear and use first gear for rough spots. The mower deck rides independent of the tractor on four caster wheels so it won't gouge the grass. The caster wheels are mounted in pairs on steel brackets that bolt to each side of the deck.

"I spent only about \$650 to modify the tractor. A new Yanmar or Deere riding mower of comparable size sells for at least \$8,000. Farmall B's in general sell for \$150 to \$2,000 depending on their condition. A new 60-in. mower deck sells for about another \$1,000."

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Machine Shed Built From Discarded Shelving

FARM SHOW has featured a lot of innovative ways to build economical farm buildings over the years. But this machine shed built by an Illinois farmer out of steel shelving is a first.

Robert Brune of Jacksonville, Ill., used 12 and 14-ft. tall sections of heavy industrial shelving (from a store that went out of business) to build a 34 by 56-ft. machine shed. He set up the shelving in a large rectangle to form a framework for the outer walls of the building, and then sided over the outside of them and put up a roof on top.

The result is a sturdy structure with built-in shelves along all four walls.

The shelving sections are anchored by 8-in. dia., 5-ft. long wood posts set 3 1/2 ft. deep in the ground at 9-ft. intervals around the perimeter of the building. Then he bolted 2 by 6's and 2 by 4's around the outer side of the shelving to hold them together. The metal siding that encloses the building is nailed to these cross pieces.

He built the A-frame roof out of 2 by 6's taken off surplus shelving. It's covered with 48-in. sheets of corrugated aluminum. Overall height of the shed at its peak is 28 ft. He sided the shed with 6-ft. lengths of painted sheet metal, leaving space for three windows on each long side.

He uses a 30-in. wide steel staircase, also purchased from the defunct store, to reach the upper storage areas.

He uses an 18-ft. long by 2-ft. wide stainless steel serving counter he got from a burnt-out local fast food restaurant for a workbench. He set the bench along one side of the shed and mounted a vise on it. Shelves



Inside view of building shows shelving that forms outside walls.

underneath are ideal for tool storage.

"Including the \$3,250 I paid for the 40 shelves, some of which I haven't used yet, it cost me only about \$7,500 to build," Brune says. "It took me five years to complete it. Whenever anybody sees it they tell me they can't believe the job I did."

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1950's Farmall Tractor Fitted With Late Model Cab

"No one can believe I found a cab to fit this tractor," says Bobby Watkins, Easton, Kan., who fitted an IH 806 tractor cab to his 1950's Farmall 450 tractor.

Watkins has a cow-calf operation and, due to his poor health, needed a way to feed out hay comfortably during bad weather. He first mounted a wide front end on the Farmall 450 to add stability and put a bale spear on the 3-pt. hitch.

Then he decided to tackle the tough part - putting a cab on the old tractor. "A friend of mine, Lewis Roediger, had a cab off an 806 IH and said he could figure out how to

fit it to the Farmall. Since he can do just about anything mechanical, we decided to go ahead. Thanks to Roediger's engineering skill, the cab looks like it was made for the tractor. I'm very proud of it.

"I use the tractor every day. It keeps me comfortable in all kinds of weather. This was an affordable project that any small farmer could afford. I'll be glad to provide information to anyone who wants to try it themselves."

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