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“MODIFIED 1938 DEERE PULLS A LOT OF WEIGHT FOR ITS SIZE”

2-Cyl. Engine Boosted From 27 Hp To 115 Hp

“It can really pull a lot of weight for its size,” says Scott Boehler, Girard, Ill., who modified a 1938 John Deere General Purpose 2-cyl. tractor to compete in antique tractor pulling contests.

Boehler competes in the 5,500-lb. antique class at pulling contests sanctioned by the Illinois Tractor Pulling Association. The tractor pulls a mechanical sled weighing 40,000 to 50,000 lbs. The 2-cyl., 4-stroke, horizontally-mounted engine originally produced about 27 hp. Boehler bored it out to boost horsepower to 115. He also modified the carburetor to draw more air. Twin chrome stacks are mounted on top of the tractor and there’s a weight bracket on front. The tractor’s 14.9 by 38 rear tires are mounted on 16-in. wheel rims. The pto was removed to reduce weight, as was the air cleaner.

“It makes a deep throated bark that draws a lot of attention. People from all over the U.S. have called to ask me questions about it,” says Boehler, an employee of Area Diesel Service, Inc., Carlinville, Ill. The company exhibited the tractor at last year’s Farm Progress Show in Iowa. “Other General Purpose tractors have been modified

for pulling contests, but not to this extreme. A lot of the tractors I compete against have more horsepower and more cylinders. I don’t win every time but I stay competitive. However, I can only go so far in boosting the horsepower because of the small engine size.

“Many people who pull tractors competitively wouldn’t drive my G because the engine is modified way beyond manufacturer’s specifications. It runs on turbo blue high octane racing gas that contains lead. The engine has a kill switch and I keep a fire extinguisher next to the steering column to comply with pulling contest rules. One of the chrome stacks is the exhaust and the other is the air intake. It has a wheelie bar on back.

“My dad bought the tractor when I was 11 years old and we’ve had it for 17 years now. He paid \$675 for it. I think it’s worth about \$10,000 now. However, it has a lot of sentimental value so we have no plans to sell it.”

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HE HAS ONE OF ONLY A FEW SURVIVING SILVER KING “PLYMOUTH” TRACTORS

Rare Collection Of Silver King Tractors

“I started collecting Silver King tractors several years ago. My first one was a 1936 3-wheeler that was all in pieces and took many months to restore,” says Harry Richard, Sr., Raymond, N.H., who has one of the most unusual tractor collections in the country.

Silver King tractors were manufactured in Plymouth, Ohio, by Fate-Root-Heath Co. until the 1950’s when they were bought out by Mountain State Fabricating Co., of West Virginia.

“I now have 16 Silver Kings built from

1934 to 1941 and I’m still looking for more. Fourteen of the 16 tractors are running but not all have been restored,” says Richard.

One rare tractor that he had always wanted but couldn’t find was a “Plymouth” which was the first tractor in the Silver King line. “They’re the rarest since only 214 were built from 1932 to 1933. I finally found one and have now restored it to like-new condition.”

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When wearing his custom-made stilts, Burbury’s feet are about 7 ft. off the ground. He primarily uses stilts for pruning trees.

FASTER THAN USING A “CHERRY PICKER”

Stilts Let Fruit Grower Work 20 Ft. Above Ground

New Zealand fruit grower Nigel Burbury has worked up among the tree tops for 14 years on a king-size pair of stilts that make tree trimming easy.

When wearing his custom-made stilts, Burbury’s feet are about 7 ft. off the ground. He primarily uses them for pruning trees and says he can work much more rapidly than other workers using either ladders or motorized cherry pickers.

Burbury does contract work for other growers and also runs his own apple, peach and pear orchard near Clive, New Zealand. He had an engineer make the stilts from

aluminum pipe with small plates on bottom. A seatbelt straps around the top of the poles to add to the stability. He uses a ladder to get up on the stilts.

He often works for up to 10 hrs. a day on the stilts. He’s able to trim up to 20 ft. above ground down to about 6 ft.

Burbury says the long stilts can be dangerous on uneven ground, with small holes or tufts of grass occasionally tripping him up. However, he rarely ever falls. “It’s a long way down when I do start to fall, though,” he says.



Richard started his Silver King tractor collection with this 1936 3-wheeler.