



Made out of heavy 1/8-in. thick steel plate, the rock box bolts inside the Gator's existing box and can be easily removed when not needed.

Modified Deere Gator "Great For Picking Rocks"

"It's the best machine we've ever had for picking rocks," says Robert Rottinghaus, Jesup, Iowa, about the Deere Gator he modified.

The problem with picking rocks with a Gator is that the cargo box on back is not heavy enough to stand up to rocks. It'll get dented and beat up if you use it very long.

Another problem is that the front end is built light so if you get a load on back, you might have problems keeping it on the ground.

Rottinghaus solved both problems by building a rock box that fits inside the existing box. Made out of heavy 1/8-in. steel plate, it fastens in place with four bolts so you can take it out quickly when it's not needed.

He also mounted a small rock box on the front end. The 18 by 30-in. box holds 250 to 300 lbs. of rocks to balance out the weight on back and improve steering.

Another idea Rottinghaus came up with for the Gator is a rock fork for digging out and loading large rocks up to 300 lbs. It consists of a metal frame that sets over the rock to be loaded. You drive two heavy metal teeth into the ground under the rock, and then crank it up using a winch that mounts on the front of the rock box on the Gator. If you tip the cargo box up as you pull on the rock with the winch, you can load the rock right into the box.

Rottinghaus built the Gator rock boxes for his own use. "As far as I know, there's nothing on the market like what we've got," he told FARM SHOW.

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Winch mounts on front of box for lifting heavy rocks.



Small rock box mounts on front to counterbalance weight on back. It holds 250 to 350 lbs. of gravel.



Front box dumps manually.



Home-built rock fork is used to dig out large rocks. You lay frame on top of rock and drive in two spikes, one on either side, then crank it up with winch.



Trantham simply dumps rocks into an opening on one side of the crusher, which consists of two large jaws made from solid cast steel.

PULVERIZES ROCKS RIGHT IN THE FIELD

Home-Built Rock Crusher

"My home-built rock crusher lets me get rid of rocks right in the field. I never have to handle them again," says Ivan Trantham, Millerton, Pa., who spent less than \$1,000 for rock quarry crushers that he mounted on an old truck frame.

He uses an 84 hp Ford 7600 tractor to pull the pto-driven rig across plowed fields before he plants. He simply drops rocks into an opening on one side of the machine and they're crushed into small pieces which fall onto the ground. The pieces range in size from 1/2 to 2 in. in dia.

He bought the used rock crushing equipment from a company that normally sells to rock quarries. It consists of two large jaws made from solid cast steel mounted on an offset camshaft that's belt-driven by a big 3-ft. dia. pulley-flywheel. A second flywheel mounts on the other end of the shaft.

Trantham mounted the crushing components on a semi tractor frame cut down to 6 ft. long and fitted with dual wheels.

In operation, one person drives the tractor while another person walks alongside the machine and drops rocks into the jaws. The pulverized rocks fall back onto the ground.

"It'll crush rocks so big it takes two men to lift them," says Trantham. "The opening measures 24 in. wide by 32 in. long. It'll crush rocks up to 3 ft. in diameter as long as the rock has a pointed end that fits into the opening. The jaws will then snap the point off, making room for the rest of the rock.

"I use it on about 30 acres a year. I set the machine to crush rocks to 1/2 in. dia. pieces although it can be set as wide as 2 in. The size can be changed by adjusting a big nut and bolt on back that's used to close the jaws together. One advantage of my rock crusher is that I don't have to spend any time hauling rocks. Another advantage is that the pulverized rocks release minerals and nutrients back into my fields. My neighbor uses the machine to fill holes and low places in his driveway with crushed rock. Surprisingly, it isn't very noisy - if a soft rock gets thrown in it's hard to even hear it being crushed.

"I bought the rock crushing components from an Indiana company for \$800 and paid \$100 for the truck frame. The rock crusher components weigh 12,000 lbs. Total weight is 16,000 lbs. so my 84 hp, 2-WD tractor has



Rig is belt-driven by a 3-ft. dia. pulley that's counterbalanced by a large flywheel on back.



Machine mounts on semi truck frame.



You have to look hard to see the tiny chips of rock left after crushing.

all it can handle on plowed fields. I pulled the gears out of the truck axle to make it lighter and welded a steel plate over the opening where the gears had been, then filled it with oil to lubricate the axles."

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