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Awesome V-8 Cadet Mows Lawn At 45 Mph

Want to see what it's like to cut grass at up to 45 mph? Or maybe you'd just like to experience the awe of owning a customized lawn mower with voice-activated "everything" and an unbelievable 550 hp of V-8 power.

Avery Allred of Vinemont, Alabama has always enjoyed car, tractor and motorcycle shows, and he has built many custom units for other people over the years. But the new V-8 lawn mower he built for himself is the best thing he's ever done.

"I call it the Cub Ca-Debt because I probably have \$15,000 to \$20,000 invested in materials alone," Allred explains. "I hand built it from wheels up from new parts. I started out with the axles and engine block, and made the chassis. I bought Cub Cadet body panels, and cut and sectioned those to make it look like a Cub Cadet lawn mower."

Allred designed the engine and the engine components he made for it. It's got a Chevy truck engine block, but all of the internal components were hand molded, cast and fabricated including the camshaft and engine timing gears.

"It used to crank to the left, and now it cranks to the right so that the mower blades and the hydraulics and everything would operate," he says. "I did all the electronics myself, too."

Allred says he "didn't draw any blueprints or plans or anything." He thought about it for about a year before starting, and then worked seven days a week at it. After three months, he turned the crank for the first time and took it to a tractor show. From there, he kept adding extra features to the unit for another six months.

He says the main reason he made the tractor was for the kids he would see at the shows. He'd felt badly for them because they couldn't climb on any of the other entries.

"I have more fun with the kids, and they get a kick out of it. I've got a lot of safety features on it – you can override the voice command, disconnect the belt and there's automatic shut-downs, plus a slip clutch so it won't run away," he says. "I let little kids

drive it. It runs the same speed as a stock lawn mower so you can walk beside it."

But the unit is also made to compete in pulling competitions and grass drag races, and plenty of "big kids" are enthralled with it, too.

The rig's dragster engine allows it to mow grass at an average speed of 40 to 45 mph for 100 feet before it needs to be shut down and cooled. Allred performs his high speed mowing as an exhibition at shows.

The "Club Ca-Debt's" 383 cu. in. engine has 487 ft. lbs. of torque. The transmission is "modified hydrostatic," and its tires are 16 by 6.50 by 8 on front and 23 by 10.50 by 12 on the rear.

Some of the features on his show model include: the "world's first" RRS (reverse rotation stroker) engine, a SBC (small block Chev) V-8 engine, tunnel ram intake with two 650 Holley's, digital gauges, speedometer, tachometer, tilt wheel cruise control, disc brakes, bright and dim lighting, turn signals, horn, power steering, hydraulic seat, front and rear hydraulic systems, voice-activated am/fm radio w/booster and equalizer, kicker speakers, CD player, six disc CD changer, power antenna, onboard computer monitoring with Windows programs, voice-activated cell phone with voice mail, flame throwers from stainless steel upright exhaust pipes (sounds like machine guns firing, shoots flames out for night shows), voice-activated wake up (starts the engine), 4-ft. chrome pipes, infrared scanner and voice-activated GPS navigational and tracking system.

One thing the unit doesn't have, however, is a cup holder. Allred says he gets teased all the time that he doesn't have a cup holder, but he just replies, you're not supposed to drink and drive.

"I'm making another custom V-8 lawn mower right now for someone else and it is a 1,600 hp unit," he says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Avery Allred, #20 County Rd. 1222, Vinemont, Alabama 35179 (ph 256 739-0285; info@hotmower.com; www.hotmower.com).

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Taylor used the circular frames from two trampolines to create four 7 to 8-ft. tall, half circle hoops. Then he covered them with chicken wire.

180° "Fence" Keeps Raccoons Out

Keeping raccoons out of sweet corn is like keeping ticks off a dog if you live in the woods. It can't be done unless you keep them inside all the time. That's why Dan Taylor built a chicken wire hoop house for his corn patch.

"About the time the corn would get ripe, the raccoons would get it," says Taylor. "With this hoop house, we didn't lose a single ear."

Taylor used circular frames from two trampolines to build what he calls a 180 degree fence. He took them apart to create four 7- to 8-ft. tall, half circle hoops. Then he mounted them in place and covered them with chicken wire.

Before setting the hoops in place, Taylor laid cement blocks on the lower side of the gently sloping garden bed. The blocks served to level the bed. He then set the frames in place and tied metal pipes and PVC pipes from his scrap pile perpendicular to the frames at about the 2-ft. and 6-ft. heights. These cross members help to hold the frames upright, give the structure rigidity and provide support for the chicken wire covering.

"The chicken wire was the biggest expense," says Taylor. "I just used long nails to pin the lengths of chicken wire together and tied it to the hoops and pipes."



Taylor raises sweet corn and other vegetables in the protected garden patch.

He drove metal posts into the ground every ten feet or so to secure the bottom of the house on the lower side. On the upper side, the hoops and the wire were secured to a dog pen that runs alongside.

"I had some old 4 by 4's and used them to frame up doorways at the ends of the structure, then built gates to fit," says Taylor. "I even put a clasp on the gates so I can lock the raccoons out."

After harvest, the hoop house serves double duty as a chicken run. Taylor moves a portable chicken coop up to one doorway and lets the chickens in.

"They scratch and eat insects and seeds and fertilize the garden," says Taylor.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dan Taylor, 19123 W 59 St., Shawnee Mission, Kansas 66218 (ph 913 441-1384).

Some of the best new ideas we hear about are "made it myself" inventions born in farmers' workshops. If you've got a new idea or favorite gadget you're proud of, we'd like to hear about it. Send along a photo or two, and a description of what it is and how it works. Is it being manufactured commercially? If so where can interested farmers buy it? Are you looking for manufacturers, dealers or distributors? Send to FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044 or call toll-free 800 834-9665. Or you can submit an idea at our website at www.farmshow.com.

Mark Newhall, Editor

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