



Burgess used an old 8N as a forecart after some modifications.

Horse-Drawn 8N Has Plenty Of Power

Ben Burgess turned a Ford 8N without a motor into a powerful forecart. Intended for use on a hay tedder, it worked so well that Burgess hooked up a 6-ft. Bushhog.

"It did well with the transmission in third gear, easily getting to 550 rpm's," says Burgess. "If you drop it into first gear, it really whizzes. I think you could power a rotary mower in first."

He explains that running the ground speed of the wheels through the transmission produces a slower pto speed in fourth gear. The pto picks up speed as you move down through the gears.

Burgess first saw the 8N at a friend's house. The motor had already been scrapped out. He had seen mention of using old tractors for forecarts with pto on a draft animal power form.

"My friend said I could have it," says Burgess. "The conversion was pretty easy as the 8N was in good shape, having had minimal use."

His first step was to use another tractor to pick the 8N off the ground and spin the wheels and the pto. The brakes worked, and the pto had overdrive, so there was no concern that a spinning pto could drive the tractor forward.

Burgess detached the transmission and rear end from the wide front end and narrowed it up. He cut the axle down to the last two holes, bringing the wheels very close together. Using parts of the original axle with the spindles and bearings allowed him to maintain the correct toe-in of the wheels.

He made a new dolly frame for the front end as a hitch for the horse team and for connecting the dolly to the transmission housing. He mounted the new axle and

wheels to the frame with a salvaged wheel-bearing spindle.

"The spindle lets the front axle spin around when turning while bearing the weight of the tractor," says Burgess. "Without the new front end, the rear would have been too heavy to pick up and attach to the pole for the horses to carry. This way the horses just pull the dead weight of the tractor and implement."

Burgess also added a safety rack ahead of the operator's platform. One other change involved the brakes. Since the clutch pedal was no longer needed, Burgess removed it and the left brake pedal. The shaft connecting the left brake pedal to the left wheel goes through the housing where the clutch was also.

"I changed the rotation, so it's right next to the transmission housing," says Burgess. "I welded on a piece of metal to the shaft to work as a new left brake."

This also gave him more platform space to stand on. He then moved the right brake pedal forward to get more space on that side.

"If I have to get off in a hurry, I don't want anything in my way," says Burgess. "It works great, but I'm not quite done with the conversion. With its built-in hydraulics, I can get lift when it's running. If I add an accumulator, I'll have lift even if it's standing still."

"I also plan to add an alternator to the splined shaft where the clutch plate was and use it to charge a battery to run fans and lights," he adds. "That's why I left a gap between the housing and the dolly wheel bracket."

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Bulging Eyes Set Budapest Pigeon Apart

The bugged-out eyes and tiny, blunt beak may make the Budapest Short-Faced Tumbler cute to pigeon fanciers. But the traits also create challenges. The mortality rate is high for the breed because the eyes are in the way as the chick uses its short beak to crack the eggshell as it hatches. Breeders often help the chick get out before it dies of exhaustion. Because of their special requirements, the breed is rare.

Initially, the Short-Faced Tumbler was selectively bred by the Pollt brothers in Budapest in the early 1900's for flying high and endurance, flying up to 5 hours at a time. But it was their strange facial features that caught the attention of breeders who raised them for their appearance.

Besides its unique face, the Tumbler stands more erect than most pigeons with the eyes directly above the legs. The body is short and the wings rest on a tightly-folded tail. Beaks can be white or dark and the pigeons come in a variety of colors.

More information about the breed can



Budapest Short-Faced Tumbler pigeon.

be found at www.budapestshortface.com. The website contains information from U.S. breeder Michel Seiler who began breeding Short-Faced Tumblers 40 years ago.



One of Fitzwater's favorites is the Red-N-Sweet developed at the Louisiana State University (LSU) Agriculture Calhoun Research Center. Researchers there bred several melon lines, releasing the Red-N-Sweet in 1987.

Heirloom Watermelons Coming Back

Josh Fitzwater, the editor of Southern Grit, a Virginia-based food publication, has made it his mission to travel the South and beyond to find tasty watermelons.

"It started when I moved from Norfolk to Richmond, Va., and I started visiting local farmers' markets where I tasted a Moon and Stars watermelon with orange flesh. It tasted different from any watermelon I'd tasted before."

Fitzwater's partner Deb Freeman, a fellow food writer, was researching the Bradford watermelon, another heirloom. Soon the two were on the hunt, looking for more and celebrating them in story form in Southern Grit. As they met more watermelon farmers and tasted their products, the interest became a passion.

"We think we have tasted as many as 40 or more," says Fitzwater.

One of Fitzwater's favorites is the Red-N-Sweet developed at the Louisiana State University Calhoun Research Center. Researchers there bred several melon lines, releasing the Red-N-Sweet in 1987. While not an old melon, he reports it's a great one and one that was almost lost.

"The outside of the melon is striped and has a relatively thin rind but is ideally named as its vibrant crimson flesh and sugared taste are

immediately evident," recounted Fitzwater in one of his watermelon articles. "The melon is so sweet that it routinely measures between 12 and 14 on the Brix scale, while the average watermelon measures between 8 and 9."

"The crispest melon I've tasted is the Ali Baba," says Fitzwater. "It was introduced from Iraq about 20 years ago, where the parental line is thought to have been lost due to war."

The Ali Baba has hard, light green rinds ideal for shipping or storage. The light color is resistant to sunburn, and the flesh is described as sweet, luscious and very crisp.

"For full flavor and complex notes, I'd go with the Bradford watermelon, selected in South Carolina in the 1850's, or perhaps the Crookneck, developed in Arizona in the 1900's," says Fitzwater. "It's complex with multiple flavor notes."

"I've crossed a Crookneck that was grown in Pennsylvania with the Ali Baba," reports Fitzwater. "The result was a really dynamite watermelon. I'm working with the seed, selecting to create a truly Virginia-based watermelon."

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Mini Combine Is A Baby Stroller

Taylor Neth's son, Braxton, is off to a good start loving farm equipment. He has a baby stroller that looks like a Deere combine with a corn head and a coaster wagon with a 4020 ROPS canopy for shade. It all started with an image off the internet.

"My wife shared a picture she saw of a combine stroller," recalls Neth. "I told her I'd build one when we had a baby."

Neth started with a standard stroller, adding a framework of 1 by 1-in. pine. When completed, the combine was 43 1/2 in. high, 71 in. from corn head to auger, and 29 in. wide.

"I covered the frame with cardboard," he says. "The cab has a pull knob on the roof that looks like a GPS antenna. I lift it to set my son in the seat. The grain bin top is where his baby stuff rides."

Getting the grain bin shape right required partially cutting through the cardboard to allow it to bend. Once bent, Neth taped it into place.

Multiple layers of cardboard were combined to make the dual front wheels. "I wanted them to look thicker to be more realistic," says Neth.

Neth made the 36-in. wide corn head removable for ease of transport. The realistic-looking snouts are made from plastic oil funnels. To get the right size, Neth had to go to the internet. The funnels hang from a length of pvc pipe. Small diameter pvc pipe serves as support struts for the cab roof. He also used pvc pipe for the grain auger.



Neth added wood and cardboard to his stroller to make it look like a combine.

Initially, it could swing out like the real thing. However, it started to sag so it's now secured to the side of the combine.

The final step was the paint job. "My dad had aerosol cans of Deere green left over from his 4020 restoration," says Neth.

By June the stroller was finished, just in time for the local Camp Creek Threshers festival. Each year a different brand is featured, and in 2021 it was John Deere. When the Neths showed up with their combine stroller, it was a big hit.

"People loved it, taking pictures and asking about it," recalls Neth. "It was a fun way to show it off and introduce my son to the event."

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