

GROW Home, Garden & Outdoors

RIDING MOWER

The backyard Swiss army knife

Wallowa County Chieftain

Many people don't know the multi-tasking capabilities of their riding lawn mowers and compact utility tractors. With the right implements, these machines can be true workhorses for projects big and small.

Your weekend to-do list may be long, but with the proper tools you can have your outdoor spaces ready for plenty of leisurely living in no time. Here are just a few projects your mower or utility tractor can perform this season:

Feed the green, keep things clean

Spring and fall are ideal seasons to put down fertilizer and ensure your grass is green and healthy year round. A broadcast spreader attached to a compact tractor lets you cover large lawns and acreages in no time.

When it's time to pick up and remove leaves or unwanted yard debris, just add one of the many large-capacity material collection systems to your compact or lawn tractor. You'll breeze through big clean-up jobs without breaking a sweat.

Freshen up garden beds

After a long winter, chances are good your landscaping needs refreshing, and a fresh till and a new layer of mulch can make a major difference. Hitch up a rotary tiller to thoroughly incorporate



Courtesy photo

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Create a new landscape

compost and loosen up the soil. Look for implements, like those from John Deere that have iMatch technology and allow you to easily change from one tool to the next.

Whether you buy your mulch by the bag or the truck load, haul or spread it around your property with the help of a front-end loader implement for your tractor, or attach a utility cart to your riding lawn mower to transport large loads.

A front-end loader implement can help transplant trees or shrubs with large root bases. The implement's strong arms can also be essential for placing ornamental rocks and boulders. And for that split-rail or other fencing project, a post-hole digger attached to your tractor can speed the job.

For bigger digging jobs, a backhoe attachment can

help with excavating a small pond or water feature or installing drainage systems and utility lines. It can also be a great time- and back-saver when digging out stumps.

Grade your driveway

Winter ice, snow and heavy spring rains may have dam-

aged your driveway, but grading gravel to smooth it or extending the space to fit more visitors will make your drive ready and accessible for warm-weather traffic.

Use a rear blade or box scraper attachment to distribute, smooth and level existing or



Courtesy photo

A front-end loader implement can help transplant trees or shrubs with large root bases.

fresh gravel for a clear path. Remember that when winter weather rolls back around, the blade can serve double duty to clear the way when snow falls.

Mow like a pro

When using some implements and attachments, you have to remove the mower deck on your tractor. To avoid the cumbersome task of removing and reattaching the deck, look for models with simple solutions like John Deere's AutoConnect mid-mount mower deck. The technology lets you drive on and off the mower deck without the need for tools or elbow grease, making it easy to do more work, with less work.

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