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# Lawn & Garden TRACTOR

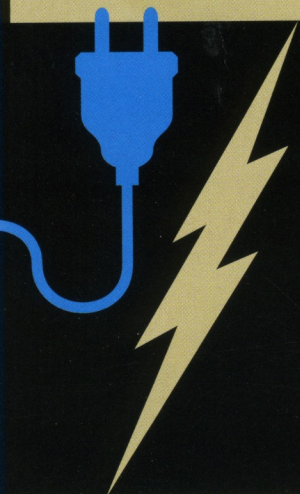
Volume 6 Issue 5 | September/October 2012

\$5.99

magazine







# A “NEW IDEA” in Electric Garden Tractors

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**ABOVE LEFT:**  
New Idea model  
EGT 150. (EGT stands  
for “Electric  
Garden Tractor”)



**ABOVE RIGHT:**  
New Idea model EGT  
R36 Rider.

In 1972 General Electric approached the New Idea Farm Equipment Company of Coldwater, Ohio, with a proposal. General Electric’s idea was to build electric garden tractors for them under the New Idea logo and sporting their traditional Bittersweet Orange and Buff Cream colors. New Idea was best known at the time for producing large farm implements, particularly manure spreaders. New Idea was keen to the idea and felt the unusual garden tractors would be a great addition to their dealer network offering.

The New Idea tractors are considered by many to be the best electric garden tractors ever made. They were all initially designed to use mid-mount mower decks, which gave the operator a little more leg room. Unlike the General Electric high-end mid-mount mower, these decks had electric lifts built into the tractor instead of the manual lifts G.E. offered on their own tractors. Additionally, G.E. also had to modify their E15 and E20 model offerings to accommodate a mid-mount deck, which was something they originally were not designed to handle. It was only toward the end of the New Idea models’ production that the traditional G.E. front-mounted mower decks were offered as an option on the high-end models. The New Idea models also relied on simple electro-magnetic relays in their

circuitry rather than the newly developed integrated circuit boards G.E. had been putting on their own high-end tractors. These early 1970s attempts at using the first primitive computer boards in commercial products proved troublesome for G.E. who eventually went back to using the simple relays in the later models of their own tractors as well.

The New Idea versions of the Elec-Trak were offered with nearly all the same attachments as the General Electric models, although many of them were offered in New Idea’s Bittersweet and Buff colors. As my own collection of garden tractors began to grow, my wife declared that she would like her own tractor and wanted me to paint it pink! Considering the fact that I had my eye on a couple new treasures at the time, I thought it would be a good idea to fix one up for her. Our friend Harold Zimmerman, a dealer in NOS and used Elec-Trak parts, had an EGT 200 for sale. After the first ride on it, she was totally smitten. The extra leg room afforded from the mid-mount mower deck design was a big plus. I never have gotten around to painting it for her (don’t worry, she hasn’t forgotten). I did mount the optional weight/tool box accessory on the back for her and added a gun rack to hold her trusty pink “BB Gun.” One can’t be too careful these days!





**TOP:**  
All the New Idea  
Tractors in a row.



**MIDDLE:**  
The back of my wife's  
EGT200—weight/tool  
box with a gun rack and  
her ever-present pink  
“BB Gun.”



**BOTTOM:**  
Four 6V deep cycle  
batteries under the seat.

G.E. made the tractors at the Scotia, New York, Elec-Trak plant on the same line as their own tractors. During the two years that G.E. produced tractors for New Idea, less than 3,250 total units were produced. Consequently, these tractors are some of the rarest garden tractors ever made. The top of the line EGT 200 is particularly sought after by collectors. I know of less than ten of these machines still in existence today. G.E. produced five different models for New Idea in which each built up from existing G.E. models.

Once General Electric completed the sale of the Elec-Trak product line to Wheel Horse in the summer of 1974, all production on New Idea garden tractors ended immediately. There was one exception. It appears Wheel Horse themselves began to produce a low-end, small rider for New Idea modeled after the General Electric ER8-36 rider. Very few of the New Idea “R36” units were produced during their only production run in 1975. At the same time, Wheel Horse produced a near identical model in the traditional Wheel Horse red color called the model A65. It is not known how many of either of these riders that Wheel Horse produced, but there couldn't have been too many of them. This same rider can be found in (G.E.) yellow, (New Idea) bitter-sweet orange, and (Wheel Horse) red.

Although production of New Idea garden tractors ended in September of 1974, New Idea continued to sell current dealer stock until April through July of 1977 when they had their “Lawn and Garden Close-out Sale.” If you get a chance to pick up one of these beauties, do it! You won't regret it. For more information on electric garden tractors and riders, please check out my website at [www.myelec-traks.com](http://www.myelec-traks.com). Now, I better head out to the workshop and start mixing up some pink paint before this article hits the newsstands! 🛠️

New Idea Model	G.E. Equivalent Model	Total Number Made
EGT 200	E20	250
EGT 150	E15	775
EGT 120	E12M	975
EGT 100	E10M	800
EGT 80	E8MHD	450