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# L A G T

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# ELEC-TRAK:

## Bringing Good Things To Life

Part 3

by George Beckett

*George,  
my thanks for all your hard work  
to keep my  
invention alive  
George Beckett*

**ABOVE LEFT:**

The GE Elec-Trak cab made winter chores more manageable.

**ABOVE RIGHT:**

Golf anyone?

**BELOW LEFT:**

The Elec-Trak Lawn Sweeper.

**BELOW RIGHT:**

Close-up of the Elec-Trak Lawn Edge Trimmer (HE06) head.

The General Electric "Elec-Trak" all electric garden tractors gave owners a variety of advantages. No gasoline was required, they were extremely quiet, there were no smells nor carbon emissions, and they had incredible torque that could out pull even 25 hp gasoline tractors. G.E. offered a wide array of standard pulling and pushing attachments such as reel mowers, Brinly garden tools, and even a V-plow that were available for many tractors. Additionally, due to the large electric battery power pack built into the tractor, General Electric could offer attachments no gasoline based manufacturer could dream of.

Clever engineers used the massive battery power pack on the tractor to replace the PTO and belt driven attachments found on gasoline tractors. This arrangement provided quieter and more powerful attachments on the Elec-Trak. These attachments, which sported their own electric motors, did not lessen the power of the tractor's main drive motor. Only the massive battery pack was shared. An

optionally available "auxiliary power pack" added even more run time to the tractors. G.E. offered multiple models of mower decks and snow throwers with separate motors that rivaled and often exceeded the performance of gas tractor offerings.

Not being content with offering only standard garden tractor attachments, the team at G.E. designed and offered a performance shattering electrically powered roto tiller, three different models of forklift attachments complete with overhead guards, and electric versions of the Haben sickle mower, and the Sweepster rotary broom! The engineers were out to prove there was nothing these tractors could not do and they did it pretty darn well!

Not only were the electrical attachments equal or better in performance than gasoline models, G.E. often improved basic attachments well beyond their original designs. By adding electric motors to the Lambert lawn sweeper and the York dethatching



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**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

Recently George attended a GE Elec-Trak party. Photos and story will be featured in the September Rearview.





rake, these attachments performed better than the original designers had ever hoped for.

On the E-Z Vac leaf vacuum, G.E. replaced its Briggs and Stratton gasoline engine with a high performance electric motor that significantly reduced noise levels below that of operating gasoline engines. Most all the motors used on these attachments were the same as those used to power either their current mower decks or low-end tractors. This made it possible for G.E. to standardize the parts used throughout its product line.

Perhaps the most significant new attachments G.E. offered were those that could not be offered on gasoline powered tractors. Believe it or not, G.E. actually offered an arc welder- something I would not even want to operate next to a gasoline-fueled tractor! They also offered a 900-watt rotary inverter that enabled owners to run standard 120V electrical equipment off the tractor. Thus, the tractor could be used as a back-up power supply during power outages. Preceding the invention of battery powered hand tools, G.E. offered a drill motor, hedge trimmer, grass clipper, lawn edger, and even a hand cultivator that plugged directly into the tractor and ran on 36V DC from the tractor's battery pack which more or less guaranteed that they would never run out of power! One of the attachments most sought by collectors is the G.E. electric chainsaw. Although a bit short by modern standards (13" in length), they are extremely well made and very powerful. There were even hard surface vacuums and a trash compactor that was offered for the Elec-Trak. Try plugging a hedge trimmer into a gas tractor!

Finally, G.E. offered a number of attachments for the Elec-Trak that could only be classified as being just plain fun! The Elec-Trak may be the only garden tractor for which the manufacturers actually offered a complete set of golf cart accessories! Not only was a rear golf bag carrier available, but a double seat, and a golf cart style canopy were also offered. Another fun attachment that could be added was a "radio bracket." This was no more than a metal bracket with a strap attached to secure a portable transistor radio to the tractor. Finally, both six and nine passenger tow-behind personnel carriers were available for owners who needed to transport people in large parking lots or at events. Think of it- the perfect attachment for tractor shows!

All in all, the electric battery power pack built into the Elec-Trak offered the ultimate versatility in a garden tractor. It had all the functionality of a standard gas machine in addition to the advantages provided by electric tools and accessories. With the Chevy Volt and the Nissan Leaf now on the market, can electric tractors be far behind? 🚗

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