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ROCK GARDEN TESTS TRACTOR

There's a miner, forty-niner and his daughter Clementine who wouldn't believe that a lawn and garden tractor is doing the job old Bessy the mule used to do, only better.

The mine is the famous Madonna mine, center of the Gold Rush days in Colorado, and the lawn and garden tractor is General Electric's cordless Elec-Trak tractor, the E15, fourteen horsepower class model converted with rail wheels. Mr. E. H. Bevington, owner of Madonna and the nearby Monarch Motor Inn, purchased the Elec-Trak tractor in 1970 and the tractor hasn't seen much rest since, without mowing a blade of grass.

He chose it because it's fumeless, quiet, electric operation made it safe for mine work. He also chose it because it was one third the price of a mine tug he was looking at. It "works" the mine by pulling tourists through the Madonna, sixteen of them in two cars every 20 minutes. And while the tour goes through historic tunnels with tool displays, a tape recorder powered by the tractor's special batteries gives the sightseers the whole story.

Before the tour was started, Mr. Bevington used the tractor to pull mine cars for the clean-up of 80 years of slag rock. The E15 hauled up to three cars, each weighing 3600 pounds, but one car was more normal.

"The operators of the equipment are elated with its safety features, starting and stopping ability, (it stops if the driver gets off the seat) trouble-free maintenance, and forward and reverse capacity (direction and speed are controlled by one simple hand lever)." The easy forward/reverse

direction change means the E15 doesn't have to change position at the end of the tour. They just back it out, no problem. "The economy is beyond belief," Mr. Bevington said.

General Electric would never suggest such an application...it is not what the Elec-Trak tractor was designed for. But the E15 was put into service in July 1970, and Mr. Bevington likes it so much, he has just taken delivery on a second Elec-Trak tractor.

Most people don't have mines, so they just use any one of the six models of the Elec-Trak tractor for mowing, plowing, blowing snow or powering a variety of electric hand tools that plug right into the tractor. The Elec-Trak tractors are sold nationwide and throughout suburban Canada.