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Australian-made machines for gardens, landscaping, and other tasks are quietly gaining popularity in North America. They're quiet because they're battery-powered from electricity/solar. They're popular because the two-wheeled, thumb-controlled steering is user-friendly.

The Cyber Clydesdale was invented by former Australian construction worker "Curly." He began designing tools when he and his family started market gardening in Queensland. His first invention, the Hand-E, operates like a skid-steer loader powered by lithium batteries with the equivalent of 20 to 30 hp. After that, he invented a simpler version, the Cyber Clydesdale, with about 10 hp. that's less expensive and works well for market gardeners.

With independent drive motors, one for each wheel, it operates like a skid steer. The handlebar has thumb dials for speed and direction and forward and reverse driving modes. There are hitches in the front and back to hook up implements.

"It's a well-balanced machine with large tires (6.00-16). It has a 3 kW battery that provides power on demand. And it's not limited to one tool," Curly says.

Add a deck for mowing, a trailer for towing, or an assortment of digging tools, for example.

"We started making it for market gardeners, but it's so versatile beyond gardening, from construction to landscaping to vegetation management clearing scrub," he adds.

The battery can last up to 10 hrs. of drive time, but it's easily interchangeable so customers can purchase an extra battery for continuous work.

Some choose to add a solar power attachment that recharges the Cyber Clydesdale while you work.

"You can customize your order to make your own kit," Curly says, including adding a seat. "It's sustainable because you don't have to buy fuel or change oil. There's just the upfront cost, and the lithium battery lasts up to 10 years."

He's working on adding remote and GPS controls to help landscapers working on slopes.

Curly's tools can now also be purchased through dealers listed on the website in Canada and the U.S. through www.et-sun.com and www.mapagri.com where the Cyber Clydesdale lists for less than \$9,000.

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