



Information Sheets

Small Engine Maintenance

'You cannot plough a field by turning it over in your mind'

Maintaining a Lawn Mower

Spring check list

- First, disconnect the spark plug and look at the contacts. If they are rusty, this may prevent your mower from starting. With an emery cloth, lightly rub the contact point to remove the rust. Don't rub too hard as you can damage the spark plug.
- Turn over the mower and look at the blade, if you can see any rust, remove it with a steel brush.
- The cutting edge of the blade should be sharp enough to slice a piece of paper. If it is not, remove the blade and take it to a mower repair shop to be sharpened and balanced. If the tops of your grass blades look gray or brown a day or two after mowing, it's a sign that the mower blade is dull and is crushing the grass rather than cutting it.
- Check the engine oil and if you did not change it in the fall, you'll probably need to in the spring. Expect to change the oil twice per year.
- Drain any old fuel, if it was not done in the fall, and refuel with fresh gasoline.
- Remove the air filter from its housing. If it is a foam-type filter, wash it with a little liquid dish soap and water. If it is a paper filter, replace it.
- Make sure the wheels are secured to the frame and all at the desired height for mowing. Apply a light coating of oil to the axles of the wheels and to the mechanism which adjusts the cutting height.
- Make sure the mower is clean from top to bottom and then check the undercarriage. Consider repainting the underside of the mower with a rust-resistant paint if the mower has a metal deck.
- If your mower has a bag, look it over and repair or replace it as needed. If it is in good repair then maybe just a little soap and water will do the trick.

What to Do after Each Use:

When you have finished mowing the lawn, the normal thing to do is push the lawn mower back into the shed for next time. However, to keep your mower in tip-top shape, there are a few simple tasks to do that won't take long.

- Cleaning the body of the mower allows it to discharge the cut grass more efficiently, and helps to prevent rust.
- Allow the mower to cool down. Disconnect the spark plug or make sure the switch is in the off position to prevent the mower from starting.
- Turn the mower on its side so the oil plug is up top.
- Using a garden hose, carefully wash off any grass or dirt from the underside of the mower.

- Turn the mower right side up and clean the upper surface of the mower, then wipe the surface with a dry cloth.
- Allow the mower to dry in the sun.
- After the mower has cooled, and you have finished cleaning it, fill the fuel tank with fresh gasoline. If you let the mower stand with a small amount of gasoline, it may evaporate, leaving a varnish-like deposit in the carburetor and gas tank. These deposits may cause trouble down the road.

Tips on removing your blade:

- Put on heavy gloves before handling the lawn mower blade – even though the blade may be dull, it can still cut you.
- Turn the mower on its side so the oil plug is on the top. Wedge a piece of scrap wood between the blade and the mower housing to lock the blade in place. Spray penetrating oil on the nut that holds the blade to the mower. Attach a wrench to the engine shaft and another to the retaining nut on the end of the shaft. Hold the wrench on the shaft and turn the retaining nut in a counterclockwise direction, until it loosens.
- Remove the nut, the blade, and any washers and spacers. Make note of the order in which they were removed.
- It is best to take your blade to a professional for sharpening or replace it with a new one if it is too worn. Be sure to replace it with one that is specifically made for your make and model.

Tips on Changing the Mower Oil: This is a handy way to change the oil in your mower with ease:

- Take your stepladder, open it up, and lay it down on its side on a level surface.
- Now place your mower on top of the ladder legs. This will give easy access to the drain plug.
- Now take a 2L pop bottle and cut the top 4-5 inches off, making a simple funnel that will fit into the opening of a one gallon plastic milk jug.
- Hold the funnel and milk jug under your mower's oil plug and let the oil drain into them.
- Save the jug until it's filled and then take it to your local recycling centre.

Maintaining a String Trimmer:

- On a regular basis, remove the grass build-up from the trimmer head. If necessary, gently scrape the flat end of a screwdriver over the underside of the trimmer head to remove any build-up of dried grass.
- Inspect the trimmer head for chipped, cracked, bent or other damaged parts that may need repair or replacement.
- Check the cutting head guard and if it's loose, tighten to the proper tension.
- Assure that the shield guard is properly attached to the cutting end of the trimmer.
- Check to see if there are any loose screws on the handlebars, drive shaft or cutting head.
- Inspect the carrying strap or harness for fastener fatigue and repair any weak attachments.
- Lubricate the flexible drive shaft after every 20 hours of use.