

This Spring Make Lawn Mower Maintenance a Priority

Few pieces of home equipment take a beating like the lawn mower, yet this popular piece of equipment is often neglected until it won't start or something breaks. Before you head out to cut the grass for the first time make lawn mower maintenance a priority. A lack of preventive maintenance almost guarantees an early death for your lawn mower, but you don't have to be a mechanic to keep it in proper working order.

1. Read the owner's manual- It tells you the what, when and how to take care of your lawn mower.

2. Drain the gasoline at the end of each mowing season -Lawn mower repair technicians say old gasoline is one of the main reasons why lawn mowers will not start. You should run the remaining gas out of the mower or drain it at the end of each mowing season. If you failed to drain the gas at the end of the 2016 mowing season go ahead and drain it before trying to start your mower. Always use fresh gas in the spring. Make sure you take precautions on keeping your fuel tank and gas container free of dirt and other debris.

3. Check the oil and replace according to owner's manual- Monitor the oil level in your mower and look for oil that appears dark black in color. Old should be drained and replaced. Be sure to consult your owner's manual for the correct timing, amount and type of oil to use.

4. Clean out the undercarriage - Grass can get caked in the undercarriage potentially clogging the mower's discharge chute. Immediately after mowing your lawn, use a putty knife or wire brush to scrape grass clippings and dirt from the undercarriage and spray the remaining debris away with a hose.

5. Inspect the air filter- A clogged or dirty air filter puts added stress on the mower and burns gas less efficiently. An annual replacement of the air filter is recommended to ensure optimal performance.

6. Change the spark plug- Like the air filter, the spark plug is extremely important to a functioning lawn mower. Change the spark plug every year to ensure an easy start. When installing the new plug make sure not to overtighten it or it could be damaged and prevent the mower from starting.

7. Sharpen the blade - Mower blades endure a great deal of stress thanks to rocks, large branches and other hidden objects. A dull blade rips and tears grass instead of providing a clean cut. Some people sharpen their own blades with a vice and metal file, but it's not recommended for the inexperienced. A mower repair shop can sharpen your blade for a small fee, and it's usually included with mower tuneup. Depending upon the size of your lawn and the amount and type of debris picked up by your mower, you may need to sharpen the mower blade more than once a year.

8. Get a professional tuneup - It's a great way to ensure your mower is in top working order for the mowing season. A lawn mower repair shop will drain the old gas from the mower, change the oil, replace the air filter and spark plug and perform basic diagnostic tests. For a quick turnaround, take your mower in at the close of the mowing season or before spring grasses start to grow.

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