



# Your Yard

## Shopping For Yard Equipment: Things To Know

(NAPS)—If you're like most people, when spring comes, you're ready to get outside and make your yard both beautiful and functional. Maybe you're aiming to have the best yard on the block, want to install an outdoor family room, or want to expand your space for entertaining. Perhaps your kids or pets could use a better space for play. Regardless of need, now is the time to get "backyard ready."

### The Tools You'll Need

"Completing big outdoor jobs is always easier with help from outdoor power equipment," said Kris Kiser, president and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI). "The right outdoor power equipment can help you get the work done faster and can help you safely maintain your yard." These tips from Kiser can help you select the machinery you need to get the job done.

- **Plan your needs.** Draw a sketch of your yard. Include any major features such as trees, bushes, an herb or vegetable garden, flower beds, lawn furniture, play or sports equipment, an outdoor patio, or birdbath. Note where maintenance may be required. Will bushes need to be trimmed back from your home or garage? Do you want to put in some flowering bushes or a tree? Are you planning to install a fence and more grass because of your pet? Now list the tools and equipment needed to take care of your yard and what will make the job easier.

- **Consider equipment needed.** Visit your garage or shed and find all your lawn and garden tools. Wheel out your mower and get out other equipment. Look it over and make a list of what's needed or could be upgraded. Repair anything that needs attention or identify where a newer or other machine is required. If you have a large vegetable garden, you need a cultivator or tiller. If you have a large lawn, an upgrade to a riding lawn mower might make mowing easier. A string trimmer might make caring for bushes or trimming grass near



**With the right equipment, you can make the grass greener on your side of the fence.**

a fence line easier. A pole pruner can help trim back limbs that are too high to reach safely with a saw and a leaf blower can clear leaves faster than a rake.

- **Research equipment online before you buy.** Think about efficiencies of scale. The right equipment can mean more time for other activities and make doing yard work more enjoyable, too. Doing online research in advance can help you pick the right equipment for the job. Outdoor power equipment can be gas, electric or battery powered and technology is rapidly affecting product design. There are even robotic lawn mowers available today. Equipment may be sized to handle a smaller job or a massive one. Ultimately, your decision should be based on your needs.

- **Ask questions.** Talk with the staff at the store or ask online about the equipment. In the store, ask to pick up and hold equipment to determine its "fit" for you. Discuss safety features and ask about fueling and care instructions. Find out how often equipment may need to be serviced.

- **Make a plan for storage and maintenance.** Store your equipment in a cool and dry place. It should typically be serviced at the end of the fall and the beginning of the spring. Put service dates on your calendar with a reminder.

### Learn More

For safety information and to find out which manufacturers make various outdoor power equipment products, go to [www.opei.org](http://www.opei.org).