

Getting Your Lawn Mower Ready For Action

(NAPSA)—With the mowing season upon us, it's time to make sure your lawn mower is as ready as you are to tackle those lawn care chores.

Briggs & Stratton, the world's largest producer of small engines for lawn mowers and other outdoor power equipment, recommends a regular, simple maintenance program to keep your mower performing at its best and to extend its useful life. Just follow this easy checklist:

Change the oil. Oil is the engine's lifeblood that removes contaminants, lubricates parts and dissipates heat. That's why it's important to make sure the crankcase contains an adequate supply of fresh oil. Before changing the oil, run the engine for several minutes until it warms up. Then, stop the engine, disconnect the spark plug and drain the oil into a pan or similar container. Refill the crankcase with high quality detergent oil that has a SG/CD classification on the label. Take the used oil to a local recycling center. It's environmentally unfriendly—and illegal—to dump used motor oil on the ground or into a storm drain.

Check the air filter. Your air-cooled engine needs a constant supply of clean air. If your mower engine takes a disposable paper filter, simply replace it with a new



filter. If the engine requires a foam-type filter, remove the sponge from the filter assembly, soak it in a pan of warm water and squeeze it dry. Then apply a few drops of clean oil into the sponge and place it back in the filter assembly.

Use fresh fuel. Gasoline turns stale after about 60 days and can form gum in your engine's carburetor, resulting in expensive repairs. Eliminate the problem by routinely filling your engine's tank with fresh fuel. If gas must remain in the tank for a prolonged period of time, add a fuel stabilizer to keep it fresh and to ensure a clean fuel system that leads to easier starting.

Sharpen the blade. Think about what a dull razor does to your face or legs when shaving. Similarly, a dull mower blade can bruise, bend and damage your

lawn, making it susceptible to disease. After disconnecting the spark plug, examine the blade for wear or damage. Have it professionally sharpened at least once annually.

Keep things clean. While you're checking the blade, remove any dirt and caked-on grass from under the mower deck. Squirt some vegetable oil cooking spray under the deck to reduce clipping build-up and to prevent rust. This will also save you a lot of work when cleaning the mower after each use.

You'll also want to have your mower tuned up annually to keep it running smoothly and efficiently. A typical professional tune-up includes a new spark plug, an oil change, a blade sharpening, a new air filter, and cleaning of various parts like belts, cables and safety switches.

Reviewing your lawn mower owner's manual can provide additional maintenance advice for your specific model.

For more information on mower maintenance, or to locate your nearest Briggs & Stratton dealer, visit www.briggsandstratton.com and click on "Engine Support & Maintenance." You can even sign up for a free e-mail reminder when it's time to perform seasonal mower maintenance in your part of the country.