

# YOUR YARD

## Time For A Landscape Tune-Up?

by Bill Klutho

*John Deere's Gardening Guru*

(NAPSA)—Most people go to great lengths to keep their car looking and running like new. Oil changes, inspections and routine washings are all necessary steps to keep a vehicle in good condition. These same principles apply to yard maintenance. Maintaining a landscape requires time, attention and a few simple guidelines. Follow these techniques and you, too, can have a beautifully manicured lawn.

- Learn the recommended cutting height for your variety of grass and try to mow on the high side of that level. Cool-season grasses should be cut at 3½ inches, while warm-season grasses are cut at two inches. St. Augustine grass does best when cut at three inches.

- Follow the One-Third Rule. By cutting only one-third of the grass blade at each mowing, you return short clippings to the lawns that contain important nutrients.

- Maintaining a perfectly manicured lawn requires the proper tools. Blowers, trimmers and edgers are essential in creating a great-looking lawn. Edgers are used for grooming along sidewalks, plant beds and other space-defining areas. There are two types of edgers—walk-behind and hand-held. There are some products on the market that are multi-purpose units—easily converted from



**It's not just a matter of how often to cut the grass, but also how long to leave the blades.**

edgers to trimmers and back again.

- Keep the cutting blade sharp to avoid shredding grass tips. A dull blade can shred your grass, providing entryways for disease organisms that can turn your grass brown.

- You may need fertilizer. The best way to determine what your soil needs is to collect a soil sample from your yard and take it to an extension agent or turf care specialist. They can test your soil and determine what your lawn needs as well as the steps you can take to have an attractive, healthy lawn.

So, the next time you take your car in for an oil change, don't forget to give your yard the attention it needs. Follow the One-Third Rule, keep the cutting blade sharp and you're on your way to a beautiful lawn.