

Your Yard

Keep Your Lawn And Garden Equipment In Top Shape

(NAPSA)—For outdoor power equipment to work better for less cost and effort later in the year, you need to properly maintain and store it now. Here are 13 tips that can help.

Storage Suggestions

1. Set up a safe work zone. Identify a safe location with plenty of work space that's out of the way of children and pets. Work only in a well-ventilated area away from heat sources, sparks or flames.

2. Collect your outdoor power equipment. This might include a lawn mower, generator, string trimmer, chain saw, edger, power washer, blower, chipper, splitter or any other tool that uses a small engine to do outdoor work.

3. Make sure the equipment is turned off. Before servicing or repairing any outdoor power equipment, disconnect the spark plug and battery cables.

4. Protect yourself. Wear safety glasses and gloves to protect against harmful chemicals and debris.

5. Inspect the equipment. Make sure safety guards are not disabled or missing. Check for loose belts or missing or damaged guards. Check and tighten all screws and nuts.

6. Clean the equipment. Remove any accumulated grass, leaves and dirt. Use a soft rag or cloth to clean away grime and dirt.

7. Drain the fuel. Many fuels today contain ethanol, which absorbs water and may phase separate, causing operating problems later. If there is fuel in the tank, remove what remains. Run the engine until it stops to



Put your power equipment away properly now for an easier time of it when the growing season starts again.

use up all the fuel. Get more information on safe fueling at www.LookBeforeYouPump.com.

8. Store leftover fuel properly. Gasoline should be stored no more than 30 days unless it's treated with a fuel stabilizer. Use a sealed container approved for fuel storage. Always keep fuel out of the reach of children and away from heat sources or flames.

9. Lubricate, sharpen and charge as needed. Check the oil levels and blade conditions. Change the oil if necessary. Sharpen lawn mower blades. Inspect the spark plug, replace it and add clean engine oil. Check the air filter and clean or replace as needed. If equipment has a removable battery, take it out and store it in a warm spot. If you have a battery charger, charge the battery before storing it.

10. Service equipment. If you are not comfortable performing some of these tasks or think that your equipment needs additional

servicing, take it to a dealer or repair shop.

11. Identify and clear a safe storage space. An indoor storage area will protect equipment from the elements. Your storage area should be cool and dry, and equipment should be out of the reach of children and pets. Store equipment away from pool chemicals, cleaners or fertilizers—anything that could cause corrosion from spills.

12. Properly store supplies. Using approved storage containers for lawn care or yard supplies will help avoid spills. Leftover materials should be stored in sealed containers, so pests are not drawn to them. Keep containers out of the reach of children and pets.

13. Locate your cold weather power equipment. Check your snow shovels, snowblowers or throwers, ice scrapers, ice melt or rock salt. If you are low on supplies, stock up. Keep this equipment and supplies in an accessible location so they'll be handy when the first snowflakes fall.

“Equipment that is well maintained will last longer and save you money in the long run. Maintaining, winterizing and storing outdoor power equipment properly means that when spring arrives, your equipment will be ready,” said Kris Kiser, president and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), an international trade association representing power equipment, small engine, and utility vehicle manufacturers and suppliers.

Learn More

For further facts and safety tips, go to www.opei.org.