



The Art of

MOWING YOUR LAWN

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ecology friendly lawn care

Many people mow their lawn without ever thinking about its health and well-being.

Inside you'll learn:

- how to safely mow your lawn
- how to choose the right mowing equipment for your needs
- recommended mowing practices and techniques
- how to identify potential problems associated with mowing

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SAFETY FIRST

Helpful Tips
to ensure
your safety.

Understanding the safety requirements before mowing your lawn is a very important first step. Lawn mowers can be dangerous even when operated properly. Be proactive when it comes to safety and be sure to follow these tips.

Owner's Manual

Always refer to the owners manual for operating and safety instructions before attempting to operate your lawn mower.

Personal Protective Equipment

Steel toe footwear, ear protection, eye protection and proper clothing is always recommended.

Inspect the Mower

Always check the mower for any loose or missing parts, and ensure safety guards/shields are in place before starting the machine.

Inspect the Lawn

Before mowing your lawn, remove items from lawn including children's toys, roll up garden hoses, move small patio furniture, clear debris such as tree branches, rocks, or piles of leaves.

Steep Slopes/Rough Terrain

Never operate your lawn mower on steep slopes or in rough terrain. (you can lose your footing and the machine could roll over on top of you)

Fueling the Machine

Always ensure the mower is turned off and is off any surface of the lawn. Avoid spills as this will cause severe damage to the lawn.

Engine Exhaust

The engine exhaust becomes very hot during operation. Never touch the muffler as this will cause severe burns.

ON/OFF

Never make adjustments or work on the mower when the engine is running. Never leave your lawn mower running unattended. Always turn your mower off when crossing over nongrass areas.

A soccer ball is shown in the lower-left corner of the page, resting on a grassy field. The ball is white with black and grey panels. The background is a blurred green field.
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MOWING EQUIPMENT

Making the right choice.



There are many different lawn mower options and selecting the right equipment for your property is essential. Here are the various mowing equipment options.

Ride-on

Ride-on mowers are commonly used for large properties to save time as they are faster and have a large mowing width. They are also a popular choice for lawn mowing service companies.

Manual

Manual walk-behind mowers are most commonly used by homeowners. Most mowers are self-propelled or manual push and are great for mowing lawns that are small in size.

Rotary Mower

A rotary mower is a mower in which the cutting blade spins horizontally very quickly and uses a vacuum sucking action to stand the grass up and cut the blades of the grass off as it spins.

Reel Mower

A reel mower is a mower in which the cutting blades spin vertically and use a scissoring action to cut the blades of grass. A typical reel has 3 to 7 blades depending on the desired height of cut.

Trimmer

A line or string trimmer is commonly used to trim along edges, landscaping, fence lines, and around tree areas where the mower cannot maneuver or cut close enough.

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BEST PRACTICES FOR LAWN MOWING

Are you using them?



Proper Mowing can make a big difference in maintaining the condition of a healthy lawn. Mowing is often viewed as one of the most important and beneficial practices you, as a home owner can do. The taller the plant, the deeper the roots and the thicker the lawn will be. A thick lawn is your best defense against weeds, disease and insect infestation.

Mowing Frequency

Mowing once every 4 – 7 days is best for most lawns. More may be required during the spring season.

Height of Cut

Mow at a height of 2.5 – 3 inches for most turf species.

1/3 Rule

Never remove more than 1/3 of the leaf blade at once. Removing more than this causes stress and can weaken the plant.

Sharp Blades

Always ensure your mower blades are sharp. This maintains a clean cut that minimizes damage to the plant. It is recommended to sharpen your mower blades at least 2 times each season.

Mowing Patterns

Mow in different patterns each time you mow. This helps avoid tire rutting and wear patterns.

Dry Conditions

When possible, mow your lawn when the lawn is dry. It is much easier to achieve a clean cut as the blades of the grass will be more upright, and less likely to clump up.

Mulch Clippings

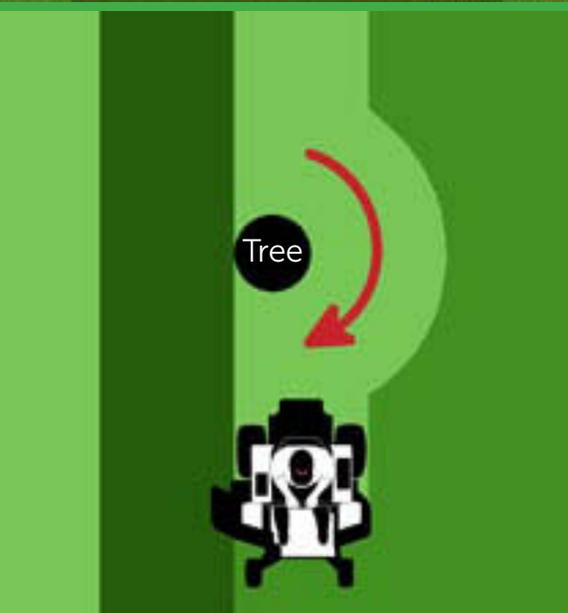
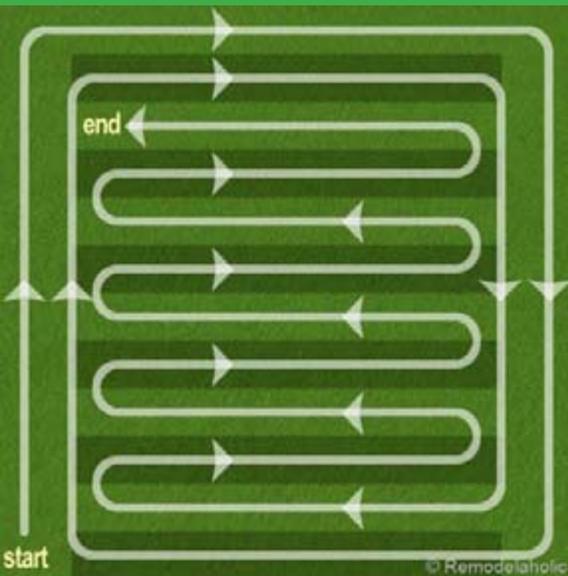
A great source of natural fertilizer can come from your clippings. Use a mulching blade to help reincorporate the clippings back into the lawn.

New Seedlings

Newly seeded grass needs 4 – 6 weeks to fully establish after germination. New seedlings are tender and can be easily damaged by a mower if they are mowed prior to this waiting period.

TECHNIQUE MATTERS

Consider these helpful tips.



When done properly there are several mowing techniques that can make a big difference and impact the overall aesthetic appearance of your lawn when done properly. Follow these mowing technique tips to achieve best results.

Direction

Use a straight cut line in a back and forth direction to mow the lawn. This is the most time efficient pattern.

Perimeter Cut

Mow the perimeter edges along driveways, sidewalks, landscaping etc. in a clockwise direction. This tends to throw the excess clippings away from the edges and into the center of the lawn. The perimeter cut outlines the edges and provides room to turn when you are performing the straight cuts.

Overlapping

By overlap each mowing pass by a few inches, you ensure the excess room between the end of the mower blades and the outside of the wheel is accounted for and thin strips of grass are not missed.

Lawn Striping

Striping your lawn can have a very aesthetically pleasing appearance. Create striping simply by mowing the lawn in a back and forth direction leaving it with a "dark" and "light" coloured look. This is created when the blades of the grass are bent over away from the vantage point in one direction and bent towards the vantage point in the opposite direction. The reflection of light against the grass creates the striping effect.

Speed

Mow your lawn at a medium to low speed to ensure control. Go especially slow along edges and around landscaping.

Obstacles

Obstacles such as trees or landscaping can be treated in the same manner as the perimeter cut. Mow around the edges in a clockwise direction.

Slopes

Mow slopes in a side to side direction. Mowing in an up and down direction can be dangerous.

Forward Direction

Mow your lawn in a forward direction and walk directly behind the mower. Avoid walking backwards and pulling the mower towards yourself. This can be very dangerous as the mower becomes close to your feet.

COMMON MOWING PROBLEMS

Identify and
correct common
problems.



Poor mowing practices and techniques can affect the condition of a lawn and cause unwanted problems. Here's a list of things to avoid or eliminate from your mowing routine.

Dull Blades

Dull mower blades rip and tear the blades of grass making the plant weak and susceptible to disease and other stresses. The aesthetic appearance is also affected leaving the turf appear brown and unhealthy.

Scalping

Scalping generally occurs when the mowing height adjustment on the mower is set below the desired height of cut for the turfgrass. The grass blades are mowed off very short at the base exposing the stems and crowns of the plant. Accidental scalping can also occur when the lawn is very uneven or bumpy with low and high spots.

Excessive Clippings

Excessive clippings resulting in clumps of grass is a common problem when the lawn is mowed when its wet or if the mowing frequency is left too long in between mowings. This generally occurs when there are too many clippings for the blades to mulch evenly and clumps cover the lawn as a result. These clumps must be raked out or collected in a bagger to eliminate damage to the grass it is covering.

Tire Rutting

Tire rutting is a result of mowing in the same direction and pattern each time you mow. These ruts can become deep and noticeable if the mowing pattern is not changed each mowing.

Trees

Use special care and avoid running into the base of trees when mowing or trimming around them. This can cause major damage to the health of the tree.

Unwanted Mess

Always mow along the bordering edges in a clockwise direction. This will ensure clippings are not dispersed directly into flower beds, landscape areas, or all over driveways and sidewalks.

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