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## Getting Your Lawn Mower Ready For The Season

Here are some best practices to resurrect your lawn mower and other small equipment from their winter nap and get them ready for warm weather use. None of this is rocket science, but tried and true steps that will make your mower run its best and give you the most years of service.

- **Remove the spark plug and replace the air filter**

This is a safety measure, as you never want to do any type of work with the engine or a sharp blade without disabling the power supply in the equipment.

Your mower needs a clean air filter every season. If the filter is one of the foam variety, clean it. If you have a less expensive paper filter, replace it.



- **Change the oil**

Changing the oil once a season (under normal use) keeps the motor healthy and removes the contaminants, sludge and acids that eat away at engine surfaces over time. Drain the old oil out and refill the crankcase with the type of oil and the amount that's recommended by the equipment manufacturer.

- **Sharpen the mower blade**

Conventional wisdom says to sharpen blades once a year. A sharp blade will cut the grass cleanly instead of shredding the grass like a dull blade will. For safety, you should remove the blade, and if the blade has nicks in it (from when you may have hit stones or other hard objects), it will be time to replace the blade. There are lots of places to have the blade sharpened, and you can also do it by hand with a rotary tool (a Dremel).



- **Clean and lubricate**

While you have the blade off, you should remove the grass that gets caked on the underside of the mower and the deck. Remove grass and other debris from the top of the mower, and wax the clean deck to keep grass from sticking to it. Oil the wheel bearings and other areas as recommended by the equipment's owners manual.

- **Adjust the cutting height – longer is better**

Ask lawn professionals about the most common mistake made and they'll say it is cutting the grass too short. Lawns cut to a taller length tend to be healthier and more weed resistant, as well as holding water better. So adjust your cutting height to between 3-4 inches.



- **Add ethanol fuel additive before refilling fuel tank**



If you left fuel in the tank before putting it away for the winter, hopefully you treated the fuel with an ethanol protectant to ensure the fuel stayed fresh over the winter and didn't separate. When you add fresh fuel, add more ethanol fuel treatment. It should contain water absorbers to deal with the water it's going to absorb over the season and a protecting lubricant to slow the solvency damage that ethanol has on lawn equipment. Treating the fuel is an essential step to making your mower last its longest.

Lastly, replace your spark plug and you're good to go for another season.