

YOUR LAWN



Get Ready, Get Set, MOW!

(NAPSA)—Do you ever wonder why the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence? Maybe your neighbor understands the basics of good lawn care. According to Billy Lowe of Snapper—builder of residential and commercial lawn-mowing equipment for more than 50 years—great lawns can spring to life when you follow these rules:

- **Get ready**—They come in a variety of colors and sizes, but no matter what a mower looks like, it can't do the job without a good blade. Whether you use a regular blade or one that mulches, a dull blade will hack at your lawn and leave your grass weakened and prone to disease, Lowe says. Start the year with a good pre-season mower checkup at an independent power equipment dealer to make sure the mower and its safety systems are ready for a weekly workout.

- **Get set**—Before you start the mower each time, check the basics. Make sure your fuel tank is full, your oil is at the proper level and grass, leaves or other materials are cleared away from the engine, discharge chute and blade. Tighten bolts that appear loose and make sure bagging equipment has no holes or tears.

Are *you* ready? Take a look at what you're wearing. Your lawn-mowing uniform should consist of long pants, a shirt with sleeves (no loose-fitting items or dangling chains or strings) and hard-toe shoes. Complement your ensemble with long hair tied back, a pair of sunglasses or safety glasses and sunscreen.

Walk the yard, make sure it is dry and check for hidden toys, rocks or other items. An object caught in the blade can not only damage the mower, it can come hurtling through the discharge chute at a velocity capable of damaging homes or cars and injuring you or others.

After you've cleared the yard of objects, clear it of people and pets. Don't risk an injury. Remove the possibility by sending those you love inside and out of the path of the mower.

No passengers on mowers—ever. In addition to the obvious danger of children slipping off the mower or distracting the operator, children who ride on mowers lose their fear of mowers and consider them to be toys—not power equipment. Children



Before you mow, it's a good idea to make sure that your mower is in tiptop shape.

who regularly ride on mowers with a well-meaning parent or relative have been known to run after the mower while it is in motion with the driver unaware that the child is nearby and possibly in the mower's path. It is an accident that can easily be avoided by never taking a passenger on your mower.

- **Go!**—Make a pass with your mower and then check how much you are cutting off. The rule is, only cut one-third of the blade each time you mow. Grass, like any plant, makes food through its leaves. If there is not enough leaf (or, in the case of grass, blade) left the plant must struggle to make food to feed its roots.

Speaking of food, why remove a great source of nutrition for the lawn by bagging? Finely chopped particles of grass can provide much-needed nutrients for the lawn. Mulching grass cuts trash-hauling bills, keeps bags of grass out of overflowing landfills, cuts down mowing time and feeds the lawn. Lowe recommends bagging grass only at the beginning and end of the mowing season, when it is more likely to be damp and heavy, or to discourage weed reseeding when dandelions and other weeds are at their height.

Finally, Lowe advises, don't get into a mowing rut. Change directions each time you mow, moving horizontally, vertically and diagonally to keep your yard rut-free.

Follow these simple rules and your lawn can be the one that your neighbors envy.

For more lawn care tips, information on Snapper Equipment or a list of Snapper dealers, contact Snapper at 1-800-SNAPPER or visit www.snapper.com.