

YOUR LAWN & GARDEN

Wake Up From Winter: Lawn And Equipment Tips

(NAPSA)—Goodbye winter blues, hello springtime joys. Even if there's still a nip in the air, it's not too early to start preparing your lawn and equipment for the mowing season. With a little work early in the season, you'll have a beautiful lawn to herald the arrival of summer.

Equipment: You can't have a perfect lawn without properly functioning equipment. Like any machine, your mower needs periodic maintenance to run safely and correctly. For example, a dull blade will shred grass, creating entryways for disease and leading to a brown, dry lawn.

Your operator's manual provides routine maintenance schedules that suggest when to sharpen your mower blade and when to change oil, oil filters and fuel filters. John Deere recommends changing the oil after every 25 hours of mowing, which is once a year for most people; so change oil and filters every spring. Since gasoline has a shelf life of about one month, put fresh gas in your mower as you prepare for the mowing season. An annual spark plug replacement will also guarantee good starts. Also, keep fans and intake screens clear, and make sure that all safety shields and switches are working.

Sound like too much to handle? Have a professional tune up your mower. Let your local dealer handle your annual maintenance tasks and any repairs that may be needed. John Deere even offers an at-home service called Ready to Mow. A professional service technician with a fully stocked trailer



Keep your mower in good repair.

will come to your home to perform your mower maintenance, eliminating the need for you to haul your mower to a dealership. Dealers get busy as soon as the grass turns green; so taking your mower in before the mowing season starts will ensure a timely turn-around.

Fertilize as spring begins because the first growth spurt of the season depletes the nutrient reserves stored over the winter. Always use a fertilizer with a ratio of about three parts nitrogen to one part phosphorus to two parts potassium: a mixture which promotes healthy color, blade growth, healthy root development and increased disease resistance.

As your lawn breaks dormancy:

- Examine your lawn for signs of disease and insects.
- Mow at the minimum height to enhance turf density.
- Dethatch and aerate if thatch is deeper than one-half inch.

It's also a good idea to:

- Patch bare spots.
- Treat with a pre-emergence herbicide to conquer grassy weeds.

To learn more, visit www.johndeere.com.