



Your Yard

Powering Up Your Backyard: The Right Equipment

(NAPS)—Backyarding—the trend to move all sorts of indoor activities outside—has become a permanent part of many people's lives during the COVID-19 pandemic. The backyard became a safe haven from the stress of quarantining by letting people reconnect with nature and each other, move work and play outside, and expand their living space into green space.

The backyarding trend is here to stay. Home improvement projects abound, and many homeowners are investing in outdoor power equipment so they can take care of their yards.

"Overall, the industry saw shipments of outdoor power equipment increase by more than 5 million units—a jump of 16 percent from last year—and those levels are expected to remain elevated in 2021," said Kris Kiser, President and CEO of the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI), an international trade association representing manufacturers and suppliers of outdoor power equipment, small engines, battery power systems, portable generators, utility and personal transport vehicles, and golf cars.

"People are really investing in their backyards and outdoor living spaces," said Kiser. "There is tremendous innovation occurring right now in our industry—with battery, electric, solar, propane and gasoline-powered equipment available for any job you might have in your yard." He offered a few tips to help.

- **Know your needs.** Look at your yard and figure out what equipment is needed. If you have a walkway, a string trimmer or edger adds definition. A hedge trimmer makes cutting bushes easier and a pole pruner removes dead tree limbs. A chainsaw cuts branches and trees. A leaf blower removes brush and leaves. A zero turn mower, riding tractor or robot mower keeps a lawn tidy and healthy. A pressure washer keeps walkways and decks spiffy and a generator powers essential household appliances during a power outage.

- **Do your research.** Outdoor power



Power equipment makes it easier to have a neat, attractive yard that turns the neighbors green with envy.

equipment has changed a lot from what you might remember in your childhood and the industry is rapidly innovating with equipment becoming faster, lighter, more efficient and stronger. There's a lot of information available online about outdoor power equipment from manufacturers and users. Talk with store personnel by phone or in person about the equipment and get their recommendations.

- **Determine power needed.** Lawn equipment is powered by small engines sized to the job they need to do. There is battery, electric and gas-fueled power equipment on the market. They have different maintenance and care requirements. Gasoline-fueled outdoor power equipment should have E10 or less fuel and most manufacturers recommend adding a fuel stabilizer. Consider before you buy what kind of power system you need and its maintenance needs.

- **Review manufacturer's directions and maintain your equipment.** Always read the directions provided by your equipment manufacturer and be sure to follow all safety and usage recommendations. Save a digital copy of your owner's manual on your computer if possible, so you can easily consult it in the future. Equipment needs to be maintained, so add reminders to your calendar for regular maintenance.

Learn more about the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute at www.opei.org.