

Efficient Mowing At Your Facility !

In the early 19th century, an English engineer invented the lawn mower because he had grown tired of cutting grass with a scythe.

Since that momentous occasion, man and machine have worked together in a quest for perfectly manicured grounds. It remains a constant, 200-year-old effort, a struggle occasionally bogged down by battles with weather, weeds and tricky terrain. Pristine grounds, however, are not an impossible dream.

There are several steps you can take to help get improve your mowing:

HIT THE DECK

One key to efficient mowing is buying the largest deck possible for your grounds. Obviously, soccer pitches and baseball fields can handle large decks because they're open spaces with no landscaping. Parks, however, are trickier because they often have plantings, rougher terrain and changes in grading. In those cases, you want to select a mower that offers you the largest deck possible while still being able to maneuver the grounds easily.

MUCH MULCH

Mulch is a mower's best friend. Not only does it make your grounds look better, it reduces the work load. If a tree has mulch around it, the mower can go right up to the mulch line with the blade. Without mulch, the mower must skirt around the tree, thus leaving time-consuming edge work to be done later.

DOUBLE DUTY

It may sound like twice the amount of work, but double cutting grass can benefit your grounds exponentially. When you double mow, you mulch the clippings and send the nutrients back into the soil. Clippings contain measurable amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium—nutrients that help make grass grow. Studies show when clippings are removed, 20 to 25 percent more fertilizer is necessary to maintain comparable color and quality than in areas where the clippings were returned. Experts recommend mowing over leaves in the fall instead of raking them, as well. Like grass clippings, mulched leaves add nutrients to the soil.

WEATHER WORRIES

Nothing messes with a good grounds-keeping plan like the weather. Recent warming patterns suggest we'll be dealing with plenty of droughts, water restrictions and heat waves in coming years. While parched grounds are never pleasant, there are things you can do to make things more tolerable. First, let your grass grow a little taller. This allows the lawn to grow deeper roots and provide the necessary soil shading. You also should fertilize less. Fertilizer fuels your grounds' desire to grow and, therefore, increases its demand for water. In rainy weather, let the grass dry before cutting. Mowing wet grounds produces a very uneven cut. The damp clippings also clump and leave a mess on your grounds and under the mower.

SAFETY STANDARDS

Finally, no list of mowing tips would be complete without a word about safety. When using equipment with moving blades, check the area for hazards such as rocks, debris, roots and holes. You also should be careful when fueling the mower because fuel poured into a hot engine can create an explosive situation. Plan ahead and refuel before mowing or after an extended break. If you run out of gas during mowing, let the engine cool and slowly remove the cap to release pressure. Always, always wear the proper protective equipment.

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