

Want a Stress-Free Yard?

For many of us, the arrival of spring isn't just about warmer temperatures and colorful blooms. It's also the time of year when to-do lists grow heavy with outdoor chores, many of which can sap our already limited time and energy and kick off a season of stress. There are fences in need of fixing, gardens that need to be planted, and yards that need to get mowed.

According to a new survey conducted on behalf of Lawn-Boy, Americans consider cleaning up sticks and leaves to be their biggest source of yard-care dread. Fear that their lawn may need major repair work ranks second, and concern that their mower might not run well – or at all – is the third biggest backyard worry.

You can eliminate a lot of these worries by spending a little time preparing for the season. “Turning your attention to your mower and lawn in early spring makes all the difference,” says Joe Hager, a senior engineer at Lawn-Boy. “A little work now will really pay off throughout the spring and summer.”

Hager offers these six tips for a stress-free mowing season:

1. Get your equipment into shape. After sitting unused for several months, your mower will probably need a little TLC, and spring is the perfect time to schedule a trip to the dealer for a tune-up. Or, tackle the task yourself, making sure to check and change the oil, air filter, and spark plug, and assess whether the blade needs sharpening or replacing.
2. Use the right mower. If your mower didn't perform up to your expectations last year, it may be time to invest in some new equipment. To find the mower that's right for you, log on to www.findyourmower.com. You'll find an interactive buyer's guide that lets you input information about your lawn-mowing needs, such as the size of your yard, what kind of terrain you're dealing with, and who will be doing most of the mowing. The guide then takes that information and lets you know about features that match your particular needs, from a self-propel system that automatically adjusts to your walking speed to a blade control system that lets you pause the blade without stopping and restarting the engine.
3. Clean up debris. When the lawn begins to wake up, schedule an afternoon of backyard spring cleaning to clear leaves and twigs left over from the fall. Picking up debris all at once at the beginning of the season will make it much easier to mow when the grass starts to grow.
4. Cut at the right height. Most of the year, keep your mowing height set high – around 3 to 3 1/2 inches for most types of grass – so you don't lop off too much of the critical food-producing parts of the grass blade.
5. Feed your lawn. Water is one of the most vital elements for a healthy lawn. But try not to water at night, when moisture sits on the lawn and can breed disease, or during the

middle of the day, when the direct heat evaporates the moisture. Instead, water early in the morning, when temperatures are lower and the grass can benefit from its a.m. drink throughout the day.

6. Aerate. Mature lawns can often become compacted, reducing the ability of critical nutrients to reach grass roots. Aerating – removing plugs of sod – helps loosen the soil, letting water, air and fertilizer make it down to the grass plant’s roots.

The bottom line, Hager says, is to spend a little bit of time and energy at the beginning of the season to lay the groundwork for a healthy, happy lawn. “Mother Nature will do most of the work,” he says. “But there are plenty of things you can do to help her along.”

For more information about premium mowers designed to meet your needs, visit www.findyourmower.com.