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It's Already Time To Mow the Lawn Again?

I hate mowing grass, it seems like an endless job. It is amazing to me that many folks over fertilize and over irrigate centipede causing excessive thatch development, more brown-patch disease and more mowing. With the recent rains and hot weather, it is lawn mowing time. To decrease thatch build-up in your lawn mow frequently and remove no more than one third of the grass height at any one time. Therefore, unless you have an automatic mower you will be on or behind a powerful machine many times this summer. Last year over 60,000 people in the U.S. were injured from using lawn mowers. With proper maintenance and safe operation, these injuries can be eliminated.

First of all, check out the mower. Read and follow the owner's manual. Inspect the mower and check safety devices such as the operator presence switch and discharge chute before mowing. The operator presence switch, or dead-man's switch, is the switch that must be held in place to keep the mower running. This switch can be located under the seat or as a handle bar. The operator must be on the seat or holding the handle bar in a fixed position to keep the mower running. This prevents the operator from being able to come in contact with the blade while the mower is running. The discharge chute keeps objects that are expelled from the mower at low trajectories.

Next, inspect the yard. Remove foreign objects which may be run over by mower such as balls, toys, sticks, rocks, etc. Objects can be expelled at 200 m.p.h. from a mower. Not only dangerous but window replacement can be expensive. Make sure the grass is dry. Wet grass will clog the mower and is difficult to cut.

Next, like my dad used to tell me "Operate this machine like you have some sense." No extra riders. Never unclog a mower while it is running, always shut it off. Keep bystanders away. Never leave an unattended mower running. For steep slopes, riding mowers should be driven downhill and push mowers should be pushed across the hill. This will keep the mower from ending up on top of you.

Finally, safely maintain your mower. Never add gas to a running or hot engine. A gallon of gas has the blasting power of many sticks of dynamite. Always disconnect the sparkplug when working on a mower. When a person is working on a mower and turns the blades, an engine can possibly crank. If this occurs, you are near the blades, you could be severely injured.

To learn more about decorating, gardening and country living watch both of our Emmy Award winning T.V. programs, Making-It-Grow (MIG) and Down Home with Tony and Amanda. MIG can be seen at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday nights on regular ETV. However, at present Down Home can only be seen on digital cable and some satellite systems on the SC Channel (channel 802 on Time Warner Cable). Also, you can view both programs on the web at www.mig.org.

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