

Yard care basics people get wrong

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RepairClinic.com, the online store for replacement parts for outdoor power equipment, home appliances and heating and cooling equipment, debunked common myths about yard care.

Myth: Cutting lawns as short as possible doesn't hurt the lawn and saves time and energy.

Fact: Cut only one third of grass blade length in a single mowing for a greener, healthier lawn. Grass grows through photosynthesis so the longer the blades, the more energy available to obtain nutrients for healthy root systems.

Myth: Watering a lawn a small amount every day is a must.

Fact: In most parts of North America, lawn watering should happen only once weekly but the water should flow for a lengthy period to allow for deeper saturation.

"Frequent watering for short periods causes lawn root systems to stay close to the surface and more susceptible to disease," said Jeff Linderman, RepairClinic's staff landscaping and outdoor power equipment specialist.

Myth: Mower blades last for years without needing replacement.

Fact: Blades dull fast and can be damaged easily when they hit stones and other debris during mowing.

Sharp blades, free of dents, are a must for good performance and safety. Dull mower blades tear, rather than cut, which results in a yellow hue over your lawn. Blades with dents should be replaced right away, for safety. Lawn mower owners should purchase blades recommended by the mower manufacturer for their particular models. Universal blades are not recommended because they often don't attach properly, creating a hazardous condition.

Myth: Lawns only need to be fertilized in spring.

Fact: Lawns should be fertilized at least three times per year. Applying fertilizer in fall will strengthen roots and enhance nitrogen storage prior to the winter months for a healthier, greener lawn come spring. Apply a fertilizer in early and late spring that prevents weeds, crabgrass and pests. Consult a lawn care professional at a local garden center for fertilizer type recommendations for specific grass types and climate.

Myth: All you need is a good lawn mower.

Fact: Handheld outdoor power equipment should be an important part of regular yard care.

"Handheld outdoor power equipment like edgers, string trimmers, hedge trimmers and pole pruners give yards a more professional, well-groomed appearance," said Linderman. "Many people are surprised by the improvement such equipment can make on the look of their yards."

Myth: Grass clippings cause thatch (a mix of living and dead grass) to choke the lawn.

Fact: Recycling grass clippings provides additional nutrients to promote lawn growth and rarely cause enough thatch to choke the lawn, so it's wise to leave clippings, unless crabgrass and weeds are present in the lawn.

Myth: Lawn mowing and weed whacking are good chores for kids.

Fact: Children should not operate outdoor power equipment. Debris such as stones, wood chips and pieces of aged blades can be propelled at high speeds. For children, this could cause fatal accidents.

"Outdoor power equipment operation is far more dangerous than people realize," said Linderman. "Blind spots, flying debris, damaged blades, improperly adjusted deflectors and other equipment malfunctions cause accidents every day. Wear closed-toe, slip-resistant shoes, safety goggles, gloves, a hat to reduce sun glare, ear plugs and cover your skin as much as possible."

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