

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

7 Tips for Readyng Your Outdoor Power Equipment for Winter Storage

Prep Equipment for Season Changes, Save Time and Future Headaches

(NAPS)—After your lawn gets its last cut before winter, it will be time to put away spring and summer outdoor power equipment, like lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and trimmers. What's next? Snow throwers, generators and other small engine equipment need to be readied for winter use. How and when you prepare your equipment for seasonal changes can save you time and money later, says the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI).



Once the last leaves have been blown away...

With record-breaking sales of outdoor power equipment, homeowners are spending more time during the COVID-19 pandemic working or renovating their family yards. This means more people are using outdoor power equipment, and OPEI reminds everyone the importance of proper outdoor power equipment storage, maintenance and safe handling.

"During this very challenging pandemic, we've learned our outdoor spaces are more important than ever," says Kris Kiser, President and CEO of OPEI and the TurfMutt Foundation, which encourages outdoor learning experiences, stewardship of our green spaces, and care for all living landscapes. "Our yards, parks and schoolyards are our safe space for connecting with friends and family, acting as outdoor classrooms and offices. Green space also contributes to the health and wellbeing of people, pets and wildlife, and having the right outdoor power equipment to take care of it is key. But preparation is everything—understanding how to store equipment and get it serviced, how to operate it safely, and how to ready your space to use that equipment."

He adds, "Always follow your manufacturer's guidelines, and remember to keep kids and dogs away from operating equipment at all times."

Here are a few tips from OPEI to ensure your lawn mower and other spring equipment will be available for use when warmer temperatures return, and snow throwers and other winter equipment will be ready for use when the snow falls.

1. Review owner's manuals. Re-familiarize yourself with how to handle equipment safely. Lost manuals can be found online. Save a copy on your computer if possible, so it can be consulted when needed. Be familiar with your



...it's time to store your warm weather yard equipment safely and bring out the cold weather tools.

equipment, and all its features, including how to turn it off quickly and safely.

2. Service all equipment. Before storing spring and summer equipment, clean and service it or take it to a small engine repair shop. Drain and change engine oil and safely dispose of the old oil. Service the air filter, and do other maintenance as directed by the owner's manual. Check winter equipment and see if any maintenance and repairs are required.

3. Handle fuel properly. Unused fuel left in gas tanks over the winter can go stale and even damage equipment. Before storing equipment, add fuel stabilizer to the gas tank, then run the equipment to distribute it. Turn the engine off, allow the machine to cool, then restart and run until the gas tank is empty. For winter equipment, buy the recommended type of fuel no more than 30 days before use. Use fuel with no more than 10% ethanol in outdoor power equipment. Use a fuel stabilizer if recommended by the manufacturer. Get more information on safe fueling for outdoor power equipment at LookBeforeYouPump.com.

4. Charge the battery. Remove and fully charge batteries before storing. Don't store batteries on metal shelves or allow them to touch metal objects. Store them on a plastic or wood shelf in a climate-controlled structure.

5. Shelter equipment from winter weather. Store spring and summer equipment in a clean and dry place such as a garage, barn or shed. Winter equipment should be kept away from the elements, but be easily available for use.

6. Prepare, prepare, prepare. Make space in the garage or basement before the weather changes, so there is room to store larger yard items. Clean up the yard of sticks, debris, dog and kid's toys and other items that can damage or destroy equipment. Clear the paths used regularly in your yard, especially during the winter when snow can "hide" things.

7. Have the right weather appropriate extension cord for your generator. Keep heavy duty weather proof extension cords on hand to use with it. Ensure the length of the cord is necessary to operate the generator a safe distance from the house or building. Never operate a generator indoors, in a garage, breezeway or under an open window.