

Winterizing Your Mower



By Bill Klutho, John Deere's Groundskeeping Guru

Once fall arrives, the air gets chilly, the leaves change colors and it's time to start preparing for the winter. Winterizing your lawn mower is an important process that often gets forgotten. So, here are a couple of important steps you can follow this fall to extend the life of your mower and keep it working hard for years to come.

Start by cleaning the mower deck and the air intake screen, especially because mulching leaves can easily get clogged in these screens. Now is the perfect time to tighten all the nuts and bolts and to check all belts, filters and safety shields. Repair and treat scratched or chipped metal surfaces, and apply a light coat of engine oil to pivot and wear points to prevent rust.

Wondering how often you should change the oil and the oil filter? If you have a small yard, changing it once a year is probably enough, so replacing the oil and filter at the end of the season ensures that you'll be ready to go next spring. Be sure to drain the old oil while the engine is still warm to get a complete flush and prevent any contaminants from settling back in the oil pan.

When fuel is left dormant for a month, it begins to decompose. Then chemicals begin to interact, varnishing the carburetor and causing hard starting - or no starting. So for winter storage, John Deere recommends either emptying your tank or adding a fuel stabilizer to keep the carburetor from clogging. After you add the stabilizer, run the engine for five minutes to circulate the stabilizer throughout the fuel system.

While your operator's manual may seem like a novel, it's actually a lot shorter, and the only symbols you'll find will be pictorial rather than metaphorical. Consult the manufacturer's operator manual for any other winter storage suggestions (for example, you may need to check the battery and the electrolyte levels). Then be sure to store your mower in a safe, dry area or with a waterproof cover if stored outside.

Want to get a jump on spring? Make a checklist for what to do when you bring your mower out again. You'll want to check the tire pressure and all fluid levels to ensure your equipment is

ready to go. Then run the engine at low to medium idle for a couple of minutes to allow for the oil to be redistributed throughout the engine.

Need a little help with winterizing? Consider having your mower maintained by a professional. John Deere Dealer. Vernon Dell Tractor offers many service packages. Please visit our service page to get current pricing for your model tractor.

Courtesy of ARA Content