



MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

THINKING SAFE AND GREEN

AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



#13

POWER LAWN MOWER SAFETY

Information given here is intended for use by program representatives, master gardeners, and those they train.



A gas powered rotary mower

Consumer Product Safety Commission data indicate approximately 4,500 people were treated in hospitals for rotary power lawn mower injuries during 2006. Common injuries were lacerations to fingers, hand burns, foreign objects in the eye, and contusions and abrasions to the feet and legs. Many of these injuries were due to operator error and could have been prevented by using several simple precautions.

Pre-Use Activities

- Thoroughly review and understand information provided in the power lawn mower operator's manual with particular attention given to descriptions of safety procedures.
- Before using, always inspect the power lawn mower for damage or disrepair and make sure all shields and guards are securely in place.
- If a power lawn mower fails the pre-use inspection, remove the mower from service.

Operating Precautions

- Always wear safety glasses or goggles when using a power lawn mower. In addition, hearing protection should also be used since engine noise from a power lawn mower is at about 90 decibels.
- Wear long pants and sturdy shoes (i.e., no sneakers or sandals) when using a power lawn mower. Do not wear loose clothing.
- Always start a power lawn mower outside. Do not operate a power lawn mower inside an enclosed space (i.e., sheds or garages) where carbon monoxide exhaust gas can accumulate.
- Prior to starting, inspect the area to be mowed and pick up all loose objects (i.e., sticks, stones, pieces of glass/metal, etc.) that could be thrown by the power lawn mower.
- Never fuel the power lawn mower when the engine/muffler is hot. Use a rag to wipe up fuel spills.
- Shut off the power lawn mower engine and disconnect the spark plug wire before performing mechanical adjustments, maintenance, or repairs or clearing/unclogging the discharge chute or underside of the mowing deck.
- Exercise caution when mowing near trees or shrubs with low hanging branches.
- Always shut the power lawn mower off before emptying the grass clippings catch bag.
- Never pull a power lawn mower behind you. Always push the power lawn mower.
- Mow across the slope of a bank or hill.
- Always shut off a power lawn mower before leaving it unattended.

For more information on lawn care and mower safety go to "The UC Guide to Healthy Lawns" at:
<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/TOOLS/TURF/MAINTAIN/mowequip.html>