

## Autumn is "spring cleanup" time for your lawn mower

You may be up to your eyeballs in autumn leaves and planning for the oncoming winter, but now is the time to get your lawn mower ready for next spring.

According to the experts at Bolens Corporation, performing a short checklist of maintenance steps now, ensures that your mower will be in top operating condition when it comes time to cut that first blade of grass. Doing it now will also save time and money.

Bolens, a leading lawn mower manufacturer, points out that spring is the busiest time for servicing dealers to make mower repairs, and that you are more apt to receive better and faster service in the fall.

You should check your owner's manual for specific maintenance instructions, but here are 10 suggested steps to be performed this fall:

1. Drain the mower of all fuel after you have used it for the last time.
2. Replace old dirty oil in the crankcase with fresh, clean oil. If your mower has an extended oil tube, merely tip the mower on its side over an oil pan, remove the dipstick and let the oil drip out.
3. While the mower is on its side, re-

move and clean the cutting blade. Wear gloves when handling the blade and use a wire brush to remove accumulated grass clippings.

Sharpen the blade (if needed) according to specifications. Protect the blade with WD-40 oil spray or a silicon lubricant.

4. After removing the blade, wipe the bottom of the mower clean of all grass clippings.

5. Make sure height adjusters work and are free of grass accumulations.

6. Clean and lubricate wheels and bushings.

7. Remove the engine cover and wipe the engine clean of all debris.

8. Remove and replace the air filter, and make sure the spark plug is operating.

9. Wipe the unit clean and spray a protective lubricant on all hoses, wires and working parts.

10. Replace the cutting blade, and make sure it is sufficiently tightened and properly balanced.

You're now ready to put the mower away for the winter months... and to fill it up with gas and begin cutting when that first blade of grass appears next spring.

## Moderately priced, simple to operate electronic timers can make your family's lifestyle easier

Imagine arriving home after dark and finding that your living room lights have turned on automatically, so you don't enter a dark house.

As you head for bed later that night, they turn off again, without you ever having to touch the switch.

Moreover, imagine your lights adjusting automatically to the change of seasons so that, as winter sets in, the lights turn on earlier.

Smart lights? No, smart electronic timers that use the latest computer technology to make your life a lot easier.

Unlike traditional mechanical light timers, these "new age" timers offer simpler programming and greater flexibility for you to make lights and appliances turn on and off exactly when you want.

As a result, these timers are not just for vacation time, but for year-round lighting control to suit many different lifestyles, including:

- Families with working parents whose children may arrive home from school in wintertime before their parents, but after darkness sets in;

- Senior citizens who may have difficulty getting around the house and would appreciate a kitchen, living room or bedroom light turning on or off automatically mornings or evenings;

- Business or weekend travelers who want to give their house or apartment a "we're home" look to help deter burglars.

Several different electronic timers are currently available, but a good start is a basic unit, such as the Self-Programming Lamp Timer made by First Alert.

As its name indicates, this timer actually programs itself by "watching" how you use your lamps in a 24 hour period, and memorizing the pattern.

It has no awkward pegs or buttons to fumble with, yet it turns your lights on and off automatically to match your lifestyle.

For even "smarter" lamps, First Alert offers the Programmable Lamp Timer with a built-in photocell that senses dusk — even as the seasons change — then turns on lamps automatically. Since it's programmable, you determine precisely when the lamp turns off again.

The Programmable Timer also offers a "random mode," which will vary the time a lamp goes on and off, giving your home an occupied look while you're away.

This unit is ideal for working women, business travelers, vacationers and anyone else who wants to use lights to deter burglars. There's also a model for light switches, so you can control outdoor lighting as well.

For a truly "intelligent" house, First Alert has designed a timer you can use with appliances, such as air conditioners.

In the summer months, it will turn on your air conditioner 15 minutes before you arrive home from work, and off again later in the evening.

The next morning, it will turn the unit on and keep the house cool as you get ready for work, then turn it off all day long — saving you money — until the cycle begins again. It offers eight ON/OFF settings a day.

Moderately priced and simple to operate, electronic timers are a very "smart" addition to most any lifestyle.

## Fall is the perfect time to prepare your home for the cold winter months ahead

If you've been waiting for the weather to cool off before you winterize your home, don't wait any longer. Another cold winter is predicted, and you can expect to see high utility bills again unless you take the time now to prepare for the cold weather.

The CertainTeed Home Institute recommends the following tips for winterizing your home:

- **Attic Insulation:** Check to see that your attic (including the attic door) meets recommended insulation levels for your area. If it has six inches or less, you should add at least another layer of 6 1/2" thick R-19 CertainTeed Fiber Glass Insulation.

It's available in rolls or batts for easy installation, and can help prevent the

warm air in your home from escaping through the roof.

- **Floors and Basement Walls:** Check for adequate insulation under crawl spaces and around basement areas. The recommended insulation level for these areas is R-19.

- **Windows and Doors:** Consider installing storm windows and doors to keep warm air in and cold air out. In winter, keep curtains and shades open to let warm sunshine in during the day but close them when the sun goes down.

- **Weatherstripping/Caulking:** Warm air can escape through cracks around doors, windows and other openings, such as pipes and ducts. Seal these escape routes with caulking or weatherstripping.

- **Thermostat:** Set between 65 and 70

degrees Fahrenheit during the day and five degrees lower while you're asleep. Consider installing an automatic clock thermostat, which will lower the temperature automatically after you go to bed, and raise it just before you get up. You can save up to 12 percent on heating costs with such a device.

- **Trees and Shrubs:** Plant trees and shrubs near your home to break the force of the wind, especially on the north side.

- **Heating System:** Clean your furnace and replace filter as needed. Close heating vents in unused rooms. Consider installing devices which can increase the efficiency of your existing system.

- **Water System:** Try a lower thermostat setting and consider an insulation wrap. Install water flow restrictors in showers and faucets.



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