

# Servicing Mowers in Winter Will Only Improve Turf Quality Next Year

- This Powerpoint presentation accompanies the similar-titled podcast that you can find at the Virginia Tech Turf and Garden Tips webpage ([www.weblogs.cals.vt.edu/lawn\\_garden/](http://www.weblogs.cals.vt.edu/lawn_garden/)).
- These presentations were developed by Mike Goatley, Extension Turfgrass Specialist, Virginia Tech.

# The quality of cut depends on

- Blade sharpness
- The speed at which the blade rotates



# Mowing with a sharp blade

- One of the most frequent culprits inciting turfgrass “disease” is mowing with a dull blade.
- Two things that help maintain turf health regarding mowing:
  - Clip at the proper height for the respective turf.
  - Clip with a sharp mower blade.





# Check the spark plug

- Is the plug original to the mower?
- Regularly check and replace fouled plugs.
- A new plug often results in immediate improvement in starting the engine.



# Remove the blade

- The fuel tank should be empty before tipping the mower for blade removal.
- Easiest way to manage this? Fuel should be spent from your most recent mowing.
- A socket wrench with an extension is an ideal tool to loosen the bolts.
- Pay attention to how the blade is installed during removal.



# Cleaning under the mower deck

- Does the underside need cleaning?
- If so, while you have the deck turned on its side, get a long-handled garden tool and scrape the deck free of the debris.
- This will significantly improve mower performance.



# Sharpening the blade

- Most will not have an electric grinding stone (as shown here) to use for blade sharpening. Hence, consider taking the blade to a professional service technician that has the equipment to properly sharpen the blade.





# Sharpening the blade

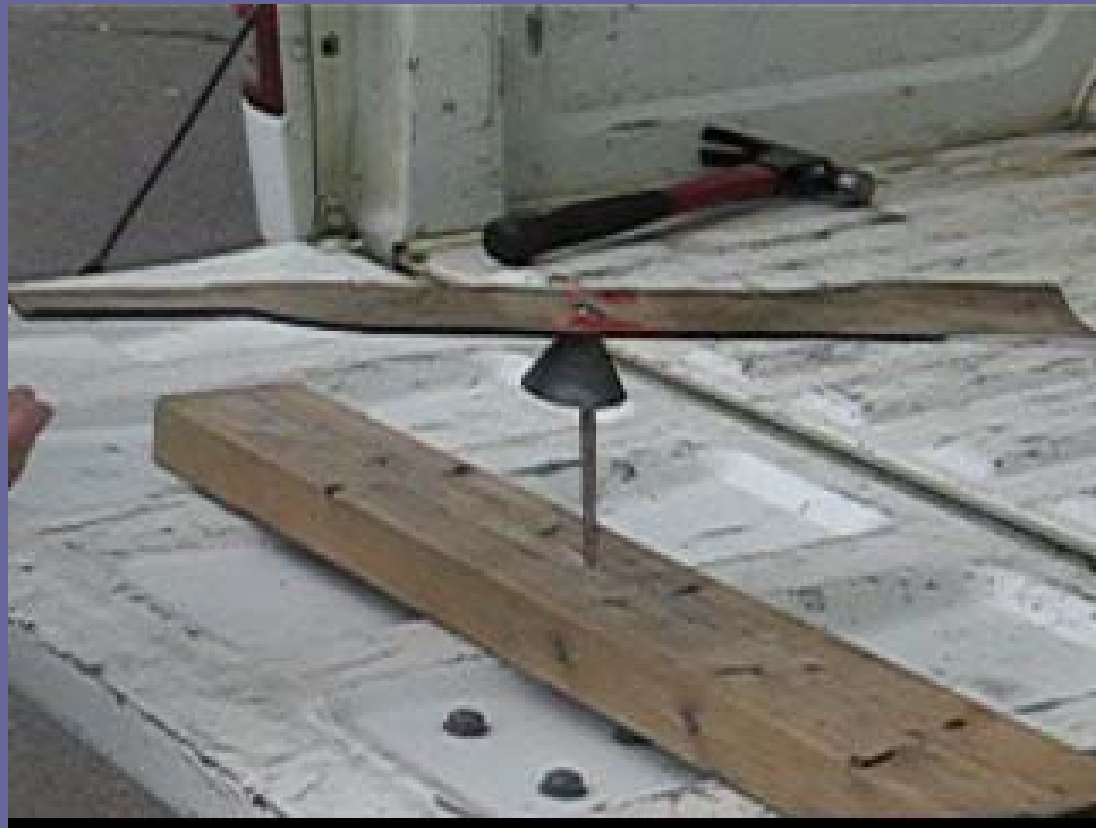
- Another alternative in sharpening a blade is to use a file.
- This is also a great way to remove nicks and blemishes following grinding that will likely reduce clipping quality.





# Balance the blade

- The blade must be properly balanced in order for the mower to operate and cut properly.
- Don't ignore this important step that should always accompany sharpening.



# Change the oil

- Locate the oil plug on your mower. On this mower the plug is on the top of the deck.
- Be sure to collect and dispose of the spent oil properly.



# Change the oil

- Replace the used oil with an appropriate weight lubricant according to the operation manual specifications.
- Be careful not to overfill the oil well.





# Clean or replace all filters

- All gasoline-powered mowers will have an air filter that should be regularly cleaned.
- Some mowers will also have oil filters or fuel filters that require cleaning and/or replacement.



# Reattaching the blade

- First, make sure you put the blade on properly!



# Reattaching the blade

- Use a torque wrench to properly tighten the bolt.
- Directions will be provided in the operation manual.





# Now, you'll be ready to mow next spring!

- If you follow these steps you will have a mower that will perform at its best when you begin another season of mowing next year. A mower in tip-top operating condition is an important first step in having a healthy, great looking lawn next year.



# Now, you'll be ready to mow next spring!

- Consult your local Virginia Cooperative Extension office for assistance in the steps in lawn establishment and maintenance that will allow you to have a lawn that is green while keeping our waterways clean!

