

Advancing the Turfgrass Industry in New Jersey and the World



TURF TIP TIME #2 with the NJTA: **Sharpen BEFORE Dull**

Every successful turf manager knows that keeping cutting reels and blades sharp is an important aspect of proper mowing. Precisely sliced leaf blades increase turf health by improving recovery, decreasing water loss, and increasing photosynthesis. Dull blades, on the other hand, damage leaf tissue.

“Blunt equipment will crush grass and leave discoloration,” said Joseph Clark, the Research Farm Supervisor for Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science. “But, you can completely avoid all that by sharpening sooner rather than later.”

According to a 2013 reel and blade maintenance survey conducted by Golf Course Industry in partnership with Foley United, 75% of the turf managers questioned follow no systematic schedule for reel grinding. Instead, many wait until they see torn turf with jagged edges.

“There are a lot of guys who say, ‘Oh yeah, my cutting units are leaving stripes behind, better bring them in to service them,’” Joe Clark explains, “but by that time the damage is already done.”

The solution and Joe’s advice: Sharpen BEFORE dull. Whether it’s reels, blades, bedknives, or rotaries, keep those edges razor-sharp. Do not wait until quality-of-cut issues present themselves in the grass.

Sparks don’t need to fly every day and there is no hard and fast rule on how frequently you should grind. Budgets, equipment, personnel, top dressing applications, and other factors must be considered. Just remember that a clean cut

goes a long way toward healthy greens and set up a schedule that works for your golf course, athletic field, or property.

So grind as often as needed and heed Joe's advice: "Sharpen Before Dull."



Stripes of grass damaged by dull blades



Jagged edges of grass torn by dull mower blades



Blunt blade in need of sharpening



NJTA's TURF TIP TIME Brought to You By:
Joseph Clark

With technical training from Toro, Bernhard, Kohler, Briggs & Stratton and Rutgers University, Joe Clark is a recognized expert in turfgrass management equipment. In addition to teaching for Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School, Joe is the Research Farm Supervisor of the Horticultural Research Farm II at Rutgers University.

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Save the Date:

December 4-6, 2018

2018 Green Expo: Growing Turfgrass Together
The Borgata Hotel, Atlantic City, NJ

