

Advancing the Turfgrass Industry in New Jersey and the World



TURF TIP TIME #12 with the NJTA: **Don't Cut Corners On Blade Sharpening**

Just as a savvy race car driver would never run a stock car with improperly inflated tires, greenskeepers should never mow with improperly sharpened blades. Mowing with dull bedknives and reel blades leaves plants more vulnerable to attack from disease and insects. On the flip side, sharp equipment leads to smoother greens and is more fuel efficient. So don't cut corners on blade sharpening.

Andy Berenty, a Product Support Specialist at Storr Tractor Company, offers some blade advice to help you get the most out of your reels and blades this year.

Don't Wait Until Quality of Cut Deteriorates

First and foremost, there is no reason to wait for dull equipment to cause quality concerns before performing the proper maintenance. Don't wait for torn turf, instead plan ahead and include reel grinding as part of your maintenance schedule.

Regular grinding will also reduce mechanical problems



within the machine itself. As a preventive maintenance practice, it not only keeps units performing at their best, but can also lengthen the life of your investments.

Sharpen Rotary Mower Blades at 30 Degrees

Research shows that the optimum angle for sharpening rotary mower blades is 30 degrees.

“If the angle is too steep, the machine is robbed of horsepower and results in poor quality of cut,” Andy said. “If it is too flat, the blade will dull faster.”

Be sure to use an angle indicator tool, which will help identify the proper angle for the best results.



Control Heat Buildup

“Overheating will weaken the metal, causing the blade to dull faster,” Andy explained. “Having the grinding stone rotating into the thickest part of the blade will help transfer heat away from the tip.”

Another way to avoid overheating is to grind the blade using steady light pressure on the stone. Pushing the blade aggressively into the stone will generate excessive heat. If your grinder does not have a coolant system, let it cool before continuing the grind.

Never Straighten a Bent Blade

Original equipment manufacturer blades are designed to bend if they strike an object. They should never break. That being said, never straighten a bent blade because the material has been compromised. “It’s like using a motorcycle helmet that was already involved in a motorcycle accident,” said Andy.

Don’t Use Aftermarket Parts

Safety is a priority. Like using damaged equipment, using aftermarket parts can be deadly.

Blades spin at 200 miles per hour. If a blade were to break, rather than sustain the impact of hitting a solid object, it could become a projectile and cause serious bodily injury or death.



Kids and Mowers Don't Mix

“My wife knew a kid in grade school, who was riding on his father’s lap while he mowed the lawn,” Andy said. When the pair accidentally mowed over a nest of yellow



jackets, the boy fell off of the moving mower and the machine ran over his legs. The boy was badly injured for the rest of his life.

“His father never forgave himself for such a senseless act,” Andy reflects.

Remember

Safety is more important than speed and budget concerns. Think twice about cutting corners when it comes to blade maintenance. In addition to saving time and money, “I hope this helps save some people from injury,” Andy said.



NJTA's TURF TIP TIME Brought to You By: **Andy Berenty, CSM CSA, PCSA**

For over twenty years, Andy Berenty has specialized in turf management products as a Product Support Specialist for Storr Tractor Company. With a passion for teaching, Andy prides himself on providing practical and beneficial training to his customers.

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SAVE THE DATES!

July 30: Rutgers Turfgrass Field Day 1 – Golf and Fine Turf, Hort Farm II, New Brunswick, NJ

July 31: Rutgers Turfgrass Field Day 2 – Lawn, Landscape, and Sports Fields & Trade Show, Adelphia Farm, Freehold, NJ

December 10-12: Green Expo Turf & Landscape Conference, The Borgata Hotel & Casino, Atlantic City, NJ

Details at www.njturfgrass.org as each event nears.

