

Reel Mower Mowing tips

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- ❖ A hand reel lawn mower provides the traditional mowing technique preferred by lawn care professionals. This mower is designed to provide years of dependable service and give optimum performance in lawn care. The reel mower not only benefits you and your lawn, but the environment as well.
- ❖ A reel mower works on different principles than a standard rotary mower. It only cuts what gets between the reel and the cutter bar. Therefore, it is important to cut your lawn regularly and not allow the grass to reach a height of much over 3-4" in order to insure a proper cut.
- ❖ Mow no more than one-third of the grass blade, so that a deeper root system is encouraged. A lawn with an extensive network of roots needs less help finding food and water and can better crowd out weeds.
- ❖ If the lawn gets exceptionally tall, 4" or over, it may be necessary to increase the amount of overlap between passes, mow the same path once up and once back, or actually mow in a checkerboard pattern to obtain the desired results.
- ❖ Another symptom of grass that's too tall is a strip of uncut or taller grass towards the center of the reel even though your mower is set properly and you appear to be cutting grass along the entire width of the reel. This usually means you are attempting to cut too tall or too much grass in one pass for the reel to cut it properly. First increase the cutting height or, if already in the highest setting, increase the amount of overlap between passes. Ideal cutting performance is achieved at approximately 1-3/4" to 2-1/2" depending on the mower you choose.
- ❖ In past years most people mowed with reels and actually sawed their way through the grass by mowing with a back and forth motion and slowly taking a step at a time. Today that's not normally necessary unless you have extremely tall/dense grass. Usually just walking normally in a single pass or at times two passes will be sufficient and provide satisfactory results.
- ❖ If you mow regularly and maintain your lawn at your desired height, the hand reel mower should do an excellent job. The scissor action helps your grass maintain moisture and keeps your lawn healthier than conventional rotary mowers. You may have to change your mowing technique as conditions change in your lawn. In the spring grass is growing vigorously and is full of moisture, each blade is thick and full. You should set your mower at a higher cutting height and mow as often as necessary to prevent grass from getting over 4" tall.
- ❖ As summer gets longer, the grass will become thinner and have less moisture content. It tends to droop instead of standing straight, particularly when it grows over 4" tall. It may be necessary to reduce your mowing height to get the desired appearance. Every lawn is different and may vary greatly according to the varieties of grasses present. You need to experiment to determine the results for your lawn and conditions.
- ❖ A reel mower has an extremely difficult time with tall willowy weeds such as dandelions or buckthorn. If these weeds are present in your lawn, don't be surprised if you have difficulty mowing them. This is because the mower pushes them over and they are tall enough not to spring back up between the reel and cutter bar. The only real solution for tall weeds is a good dose of an organic weed and feed (or as a last resort, a commercially available chemical solution) or mowing before they reach their full growth.
- ❖ The biggest error most people make with any mower, including garden tractors and power rotary mowers, is to let the grass get too tall. Grass is always taller than you think. Many times it is 6" or higher before you know it.
- ❖ It is important to remember that grass has a grain and growing pattern that can vary greatly between varieties. Therefore the directions in which you mow can affect how well you mow. Experiment to determine the optimum mowing technique for your lawn.