



## *Mowing Tips for a Hardy, Healthy Lawn*

Volleyball games, croquet, picnics and Slip 'N Slides will leave no trace on your lawn if you care for it properly.

“How you mow your lawn is more important to its well-being than the types of activities you use your lawn for,” explains Bill Klutho of John Deere and a contributor to Project EverGreen. “Proper care of your mowing equipment will also improve your lawn’s appearance and strength.”

Recently, green industry associations and companies such as John Deere have come together to form Project EverGreen to raise the awareness of the environmental, economic and lifestyle benefits of landscapes and promote the significance of those who preserve and enhance green spaces at home, work and play. Project EverGreen is sharing knowledge about healthy turf with consumers.

### **Mowing Techniques**

With the exception of the first mowing of the season, never cut more than one-third of the grass leaf blade during a single mowing. Leaving grass longer aids in reducing water needs and helps grass absorb sunshine for photosynthesis. Grass mowed at two to three inches maintains a deeper root system than grass mowed at one inch.

Before mowing, perform a safety check by removing debris or trash from the lawn that could become harmful projectiles. The best time to mow is during the day when the grass is dry, never when the light is dim or the lawn is wet. It’s best to leave grass clippings on the lawn to return nutrients to the soil. Also, children should never be allowed to ride on a mower.

To avoid soil compaction and wear, vary the direction in which the lawn is mowed. For example, mow horizontally one week, vertically the next and diagonally the week

after. This is especially beneficial for smaller areas.

### **Mowing Equipment**

Keeping mower blades sharp is key to having strong grass. Have the blades professionally sharpened once a year to avoid tearing or wounding the grass stems, making them vulnerable to pests and damage.

To prevent residual grass clippings from interfering with the mower blades’ motion, remove the spark plug lead from the engine and hose away any grass sticking to the deck. This will help to keep dirt and debris off the engine to ensure it doesn’t overheat.

At the beginning of the season, have a tune-up and safety inspection. Change the oil after every 50 hours of use, the air filter every 25 hours, and always use fresh fuel in a clean, approved container.

Following these simple mowing tips and mower maintenance practices will help to produce a hardy, healthy lawn that easily withstands even the most vigorous family pastimes. If you have any questions about mower maintenance, check your owner’s manual for specific information on your equipment.

Now, get out there and enjoy your lawn!

For more information about Project EverGreen, visit [www.projectevergreen.com](http://www.projectevergreen.com).