

No Experience Necessary

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ThingsGreen.com Garden Tip

by America's Natural Master Gardener™, Nick Federoff



Normally our lawn equipment takes a back seat when the weather cools down and may not be used all winter long. But, blink your eyes and before you know it, Spring will be here. The first time you crank up that lawnmower, edger or rototiller you want it to start on the first pull, right?

Power equipment is one of the most expensive gardening investments. A 21" lawnmower can reach well over \$1,000. Preventative care will extend the life of your equipment for many years to come. And the best part is, you can do it yourself!

The first thing you want to do is to disconnect the spark plug. This will ensure the engine will not accidentally start. Now, let's get to work by locating the air filter. Most air filters are the throw away type and can't be washed. So, simply replace it. If it's a foam filter, wash it in warm soapy water, dry it off then work in a dabble of oil in it to catch incoming debris.

Since the air filter is off, that's where the carburetor is located. Blow any debris then spray a small amount of carburetor cleaner in and around the area. Coming out of the carburetor is a hose that attaches to the gas tank. Pull the hose out and drain the fuel out of the tank. Once it's empty, reattach the hose. Fill the tank only ¼ of the way with fresh fuel so we can test it out after the tune up. Now, put the air filter back.

Changing the oil sounds like a daunting task, but, it's really simple. Under the engine, and on some models on the side, is a square 'plug' that can be removed. Make sure you have some-thing to catch the oil as it oozes out. Put the plug back then locate the oil inlet on the side or top of the engine. Some engines will have an actual dipstick while others a two-prong plug. It's quite unique looking – you can't miss it. This is where you'll put in your new oil.

Now it's time to replace the spark plug with a new one then reattached the wire to the plug. With practice and the right tools, you should be able to do all of this in less than an hour.

It's time to test your work. It may take several pulls to start it the first time out. Warm it up for a while, then, when it's time to bring it out it mow, rototill or edge it'll be ready to go.

Want to talk plants? Feel free to call me 24/7, toll free at 1-800-405-NICK(6425). And, see my videos at www.ocregister.com/rie and click on ThingsGreen.TV.

