

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE MODERN LAWN: MOWING



YARD SMART 2011 – Fact Sheet #2 *from the* ECOLOGY ACTION CENTER

How do you mow your lawn? What are the negative environmental impacts? Are there alternatives that reduce or eliminate these impacts? This fact sheet will give you an overview of this part of the modern lawn.

BASIC FACTS

1. The bigger the mower, the more non-renewable fossil fuels used in its construction and maintenance.
2. Some 580 million gallons of gas are used each year for power mowers; riding power-mowers use the most.
3. A study of air pollution in California found that mower emissions per year equaled that produced by 3,500,000 automobiles driven 16,000 miles each.
4. Noise pollution is a significant irritant for many people and has a negative impact on wildlife, particularly during their breeding season.
5. Regular mowing reduces wildlife habitat, destroys nesting wildlife, and eliminates food for pollinating insects that farmers and nature depend upon.

ALTERNATIVES

No-Mowing Option:

The method with the least environmental impact is to stop mowing altogether. Native landscaping (see YardSmart Fact Sheet #6) offers this opportunity.

Mowing Options:

1. A reel mower (= push mower), powered manually, has the least impact. This assumes that your physical condition and lawn size are a good match. Some people convert most of their lawn to native landscaping, and leave a smaller part as an organic lawn to make this option work.
2. An electric mower that is powered by a rechargeable battery or a cord plugged into an outdoor socket is another alternative to the traditional power mower. These are easier to push than a reel mower, and the amount of electricity used is minimal.

PRODUCT INFORMATION

Although we do not endorse or receive proceeds from any particular companies, we do provide the following suggestions to explore for reel and electric mowers.

REEL MOWERS:

Regular sharpening of the blade is important. Locally, one can have that done at:

Sharpening Shop, 710 N. Lumber St., Bloomington (north section of Lumber).
309-820-8383.

Mohr Window and Door (sharpen reel mowers only). Ask for Dick. 613 Oglesby,
Normal. 309-454-6647.

Farm and Fleet. 2201 West Market Street. Bloomington, IL 61705. 309-829-0018

ELECTRIC MOWERS:

Bully Co. Manufacturer and wholesale supplier. Lake Barrington, Illinois, 60010.
847-304-0900