



MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

THINKING SAFE AND GREEN



**AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**

#14

GRASS TRIMMER SAFETY

Information given here is intended for use by program representatives, master gardeners, and those they train.



Photograph Courtesy of UC IPM

Consumer Product Safety Commission data indicate more than 11,000 people were treated in hospitals for grass trimmer injuries during 2006. Most of the injuries were lacerations to the fingers, hands, and legs and foreign objects, lacerations, and contusions to the eyes. Other injuries included strains and sprains. Most grass trimmer injuries are avoidable and are due to operator inexperience or inattentive or improper handling of grass trimmers.

Pre-Use Activities

- Thoroughly review and understand information provided in the grass trimmer operator's manual with particular attention given to descriptions of safety procedures.
- Before using, always inspect the grass trimmer for damage or disrepair and make sure the cutting head and shield are securely in place. For electric grass trimmers inspect the electrical cord for fraying or damage.
- If a grass trimmer fails the pre-use inspection, remove the grass trimmer from service.

Operating Precautions

- Always wear safety glasses or goggles and gloves when using a grass trimmer.
- Wear long pants and sturdy shoes (i.e., no sneakers or sandals) when using a grass trimmer. Do not wear loose clothing.
- Always start a gasoline-powered grass trimmer outside. Do not operate a gasoline-powered grass trimmer inside an enclosed space (i.e., sheds or garages) where carbon monoxide exhaust gas can accumulate.
- Prior to starting, inspect the work area and pick up all loose objects (i.e., sticks, stones, pieces of glass/metal, etc.) that could be thrown by the grass trimmer.
- When working outdoors, wear the appropriate clothing and sun protection for the weather conditions and consume adequate amounts of fluids to prevent dehydration.
- Always operate the grass trimmer with the cutting head below the waist. Avoid overreaching with a grass trimmer.
- Exercise caution when trimming grass near trees or shrubs with low hanging branches.
- Never fuel a gasoline-powered grass trimmer when the engine is hot. Use a rag to wipe up fuel spills.
- Shut off the grass trimmer and disconnect the spark plug wire or electric cord before performing mechanical adjustments, maintenance, or repairs or clearing/unclogging the underside of the cutting attachment and shield.
- Maintain the grass trimmer according to the manufacturer's instructions, including cleaning, lubricating, and storage of the grass trimmer.