

Article for February 24, 2016

## Yard Work

Here's hoping you used our safety suggestions and began your spring cleaning this past week! Let's switch gears a little, but continue to focus on outdoor activities! So, we started cleaning up in the garage or shed last week. This week, we'll move a little further outdoors and focus on yardwork safety. Here are some great tips to remember:

- Limber up. Yard chores may seem easy, but they involve muscles you probably haven't used in a while.
- Always wear protective clothing when you handle pesticides and fertilizers, and don't wear loose garments if you're using a lawn mower, chainsaw, or other equipment with moving parts.
- More than 75,000 people are injured in lawn mowing accidents each year. 10,000 of them are children. Always read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe operation of lawn mowers, edgers, trimmers, pruners, power saws, etc. Inspect the mower or tool and do NOT use it if there are problems.
- Pick up or rake stones and loose debris before mowing to help prevent them from being launched into the air.
- Wear sturdy shoes while mowing. Do not wear sandals.
- Wear eye and hearing protection.
- Make sure blade guards are in place on all cutting equipment.
- Unplug all electrical tools when not in use, and then make sure the tool is in the "off" position before you plug it in.
- Store gasoline-powered equipment away from potential ignition sources (i.e. pilot light).
- Always start and refuel mowers or equipment outdoors. Remember, when refueling your mower, make sure the engine is off and cool. Don't spill gasoline on a hot engine — and *don't* smoke while pouring gasoline.
- Make sure you use the right tool for the task at hand.
- When pruning trees, be careful not to let metal ladders or trimmers contact overhead wires.
- Before you do any hands on weed removal make sure you know how to identify poison ivy, sumac, oak and similar toxic plants. Find out ahead of time how to treat the rashes they cause to reduce the irritation.

Now, you've got some guidance to get yard cleaning underway. Get out there; clean it up, smile while you're done and Be Safe Out There!