

## Mower Maintenance: Cleaning Lawn Residues Off of Mower Decks

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Lawn care contractors manage and maintain several sites as part of their operations; however, issues from one property may pose problems on other sites if not properly addressed. For example, one of the primary problems that lawn care contractors encounter is the occurrence of weeds in the lawn. Mowing over these weeds controls the problem in the moment; however, that is seldom a permanent solution to the weed issue. Difficult-to-control weeds will almost always grow back and, even worse, may have already set seed by the time they are mowed again. Lawn debris, including grass clippings and weed residues, may remain on the mower deck after a fresh cut. These materials can be easily transported from one site to another, spreading weed issues between clients. Moreover, lawn diseases may also be transported through remaining grass clippings from one client to another. A simple but effective procedure to prevent this issue is making sure that mower

decks are cleaned of debris from one site prior to mowing at a different location.

Ensuring that mower decks are frequently cleaned does not just limit the spread of weeds and disease but can also maintain the longevity of mowing equipment. Trapped debris within the moving parts of the mower, such as belts and pulleys, can contribute to corrosion and rust, damaging sensitive sections of your equipment, particularly if the clippings are wet. This can negatively impact the performance of your equipment and require more frequent repairs. Making sure that your mowers are well taken care of is a great way to maximize the lifespan of expensive equipment, allowing you to get the most for your money. Finally, a clean mower reflects well on the professionalism of your operation. After all, no one wants to drive behind a mower that is shedding lawn residues in its wake.



*Mower with lawn clippings covering the deck. Photo by Damon Abdi*

A simple solution that can be performed between each individual job site is to blow off the residues from the deck. A few minutes with a backpack blower or an air compressor can save hours of headaches later. If the material has become caked onto the mower, use a readily available tool to chisel it away. Avoid using your hands to remove debris in hard-to-

reach places. Always remember to ensure that the mower is turned off – removing the spark plug is not a bad idea – and that parts are no longer in motion prior to performing any maintenance. More intensive cleaning can be performed at less regular intervals, depending on the extent to which the mower is used and the nature of the job site.

**For more information on lawn care and maintenance, please contact your local LSU AgCenter extension office or visit our website at [www.LSUAgCenter.com](http://www.LSUAgCenter.com).**



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