

Is An Electric Meat Cutter A Good Mother's Day Gift?  
July Lawn Care Tips  
By Eric Marble of Chanshare Farms

For Mother's Day when I was 13 I decided to save up my allowance and get my mom a nice gift. I started saving and watching the newspaper ads in March to find just the right gift. A couple weeks before Mother's Day I saw an ad which read, 'Make Mom's Life Easier With These Great Gifts!'. In the ad were various gifts, and my eyes were caught on the kitchen appliance section. There was an electric meat cutter and an electric mixer on sale (neither of which we had) and I had just enough money to get both. And since most every Sunday we had a big roast with mashed potatoes I felt they were items that would be used and appreciated. I started building up my mom's expectations from that point on, telling her, "You're gonna love your gift! It is so great! It will make your life easier!" I had a hard time waiting for Mother's Day. I almost couldn't stand to watch as she unwrapped the gifts, I was soooo excited! Needless to say I didn't receive the reaction I was hoping for. And I took a mental note to NEVER buy a woman an appliance for a birthday or holiday again.

Men, on the other hand, generally love anything with power and gush over anything that requires gasoline or charging to operate. For Father's Day this year I got the best gift EVER!! A brand new lawn mower! It is green, and shiny, and has an electric starter. It is a push mower with a drive train that has one speed, FAST (at least compared to my last mower, a reel mower, which required no gas and only went about one quarter the speed I wanted to walk at any given time). My wife gave it to me Saturday night and I took it out of the box immediately, gassed it up and mowed my front lawn which made us late for our evening festivities. I was so excited that on Monday I spent several hours mowing a neighbor's lawn just for the fun of it.

A good gift is one that is well suited to the person receiving the gift; one that shows thoughtfulness and an understanding of the receiver's preferences or needs. Taking care of your lawn is similar to selecting a good gift. Noticing what your lawn needs and responding appropriately will create a much better reaction than just following a prescribed annual maintenance regiment. Here are some things to watch out for:

**Color** – If your lawn is green, and doesn't yellow between irrigation cycles, chances are it doesn't need fertilizer just yet. However, with the amount of rain we received in June, the nutrients from your last fertilization are most likely expended. If you feel your lawn needs a little perking up fertilize in the beginning of the month.

**Water** – As temperatures move to the 90 degree mark and beyond, cool season grasses go dormant by slowing down blade and root growth. Watch your lawn for signs of distress and water only when you see the lawn drying out (normally about 1" of water every 6-7 days). If your soil profile will allow you to apply this in one application without runoff then run your cycle once a week. If not run two cycles at half time back to back to allow the water to percolate without runoff or you can break up the watering into ½" every 3-4 days. The more you can apply at one time the better, as longer, deeper waterings will lead to longer, deeper roots.

**Mow** - Raise the height of your mower to 2 ½"-3". Taller blades will create longer roots and will shade the soil and lessen evaporation and transpiration. And with a longer blade you will not have to mow as often. It is best to mulch clippings and leave them on the lawn because clippings are primarily water and nutrients that will return to the soil. If your blade heads look yellow after mowing it is probably a sign that your mower blade needs sharpening.

Over watering, over fertilizing, or mowing your lawn too short is like giving your mother a meat cutter for Mother's Day. It goes over like a ton of bricks. Watch for clues to discover what your lawn needs and then respond accordingly and you will get positive results. If you have any specific lawn care questions email them to [customerservice@chanshare.com](mailto:customerservice@chanshare.com) and I will help you in any way I can. Now, I need to go play with my shiny new lawn mower!!!

As Always, Happy Gardening!

