

## ELECTRIC LAWNMOWERS by Carolina Teixeira

Gas powered lawn mowers use approximately 800 million gallons of gasoline every year and produce 1/10 of the total smog-forming pollutants from all mobile gas devices. Eco-friendly alternatives include completely removing turf from your landscape or purchasing an electric mower. This article presents some variables to consider when shopping for an electric mower and some pros and cons.

Electric mowers are as diverse as lawns, all shapes and sizes. The one you choose really depends on your needs. How big is your lawn? How much are you willing to invest? How much horsepower do you need? Do you need one with or without a grass catching bag? Which brand is the best option? With so many options in the market, the question is which one to choose? Corded models have been around for about 40 years. Developed to address cord safety issues, the electric non-corded mowers are a relatively new and hot eco-friendly trend in mowers. Both have a fanlike blade that cuts off the top of the grass blades.

### **PROS**

- Good for the environment (Lower emissions)
- No gas to buy or store
- Unlimited mowing time (corded mowers)
- Fairly quiet (Compared to gas powered lawn mowers that can run 85 decibels +)
- Easy to control
- Less routine maintenance
- Cordless models are available
- Easy starting
- Rebates may be available
- Electric mowers cut a slightly narrower path than most gas mowers. This is helpful for mowing in tight areas
- Some mowers allow you to switch batteries out if you need more time.
- Yearly maintenance for electric mowers is estimated at about \$5-\$25 per year, while a gas powered mower uses more than \$700 a year in gasoline, parts, tune ups and oil.
- Only takes about 10 cents worth of electricity to charge.

### **CONS**

- Difficulty getting parts and service for them
- Dealing with the cord, which maxes out at 100 feet or less, could be a safety hazard.
- Mowing does take slightly longer
- Reliability and repairs can be a problem
- Most mowers only last up to an hour, then you have to recharge
- Recommended for lawns of 1/3 acre or less
- Mowers cannot tackle badly overgrown lawns or grasses that are too wet; cordless models battery will lose its charge more quickly when cutting long or wet grass
- If wrong type of extension cord is used, it can harm the engine

Prices for these mowers vary from \$150 - \$250 for corded, and \$200+ for non-corded. Shopping around will get you the best value and buying used is an option to consider. Technology has taught one thing: we are never too far from a newer, better, and faster product. Perhaps 10 years from now all gas powered mowers will be obsolete, and no one will have to wake up to the noisy neighbors' lawn mower on those lazy weekends.