



# YARD AND GARDEN SAFETY



Warmer weather brings with it the opportunity to get outside and do some yard and garden work. Working outdoors can help you meet your physical activity needs and grow fruits and vegetables all while beautifying your neighborhood.<sup>1</sup> Just be sure to make health and safety your number one priority when operating tools and equipment.<sup>1</sup>

*U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Josue L. Escobosa*

Each year, thousands of people are injured or killed in yard and garden accidents. In 2010, 36,000 were injured using a stepladder and 41,000 were hurt using gardening equipment.<sup>2</sup> Heavy machinery such as lawnmowers can also present hazards. Between 2010 and 2012, 38,000 people were treated in emergency rooms due to walk-behind lawnmower accidents<sup>3</sup> and 34,000 were injured using riding lawnmowers.<sup>4</sup> In addition, there were 9,000 deaths caused by riding lawnmowers between 2007 and 2009.<sup>4</sup>

## Prevention Tips<sup>1,2</sup>

Check out the prevention tips below to be safe while working outdoors.

- ▶ Wear safety goggles, ear plugs, protective shoes, and gloves.
- ▶ Choose close-fitting long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and a wide-brimmed hat to protect your skin from the sun as well as flying debris from yard equipment.
- ▶ Apply sunscreen with sun protective factor (SPF) 15 or higher to prevent sunburn.
- ▶ Use insect repellent with DEET to ensure long-lasting protection from insects and bugs.
- ▶ Drink plenty of water throughout the day to stay [hydrated](#).
- ▶ Work in the shade and take breaks often to avoid heat illness. Check out [Heat/Sun Injury](#) for more prevention tips.
- ▶ Ensure equipment is in good condition prior to use and at the beginning of the season after being stored for the winter.
- ▶ Stay alert when operating machinery. Similar to a car, do not consume alcohol while operating machinery such as lawnmowers.
- ▶ Properly clean and store equipment after use.
- ▶ Keep children away from power tools and equipment.

<sup>1</sup> Gardening Health and Safety Tips. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/family/gardening/>. Updated 22 April 2014. Accessed March 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Yard and Garden Safety. Air Force Ground Safety Staff. Air Force Safety Center. [www.afsec.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-120614-087.pdf](http://www.afsec.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-120614-087.pdf). Updated 20 June 2012. Accessed March 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Power Lawnmowers Fact Sheet. U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Media/Documents/Safety-Education/Safety-Guides/Home-Outdoors-Garden/5126/>. Published 1 May 2013. Accessed March 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Riding Lawnmowers Fact Sheet. U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Media/Documents/Safety-Education/Safety-Guides/Home-Outdoors-Garden/588/>. Published 1 May 2013. Accessed March 2015.

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