



## Overwinter Tools

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*Jim Ruen*

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It's getting cold here in Minnesota, and that means it's time to put away some of the motorized tools for the yard and farm.

If you're like me, it's awfully easy to push or carry them into a corner of the shed and forget about them until spring.

While it may be easy, it's not smart. It doesn't take much to winterize now so we don't have to spend the best part of a day next spring getting them cleaned up and running.

The first step in any maintenance should be to make note of any spot where oil appears to be leaking. Then clear away dirt, grease or debris before working on fluids or filters. Debris and dirt are also a likely place for moisture to collect and cause corrosion over winter.

Sharpen blades and knives that have dulled over the past season. A few minutes with a file or grinding wheel will save lots of time in the spring. If the blade is too pitted or worn to renew, replace it now.

Give the engine a break. At the very least, siphon out excess fuel and run the tank dry before storing. Better yet is to change the oil and add a stabilizer like Sea Foam to it and the fuel tank if you intend to leave old fuel in the tank over winter.

Best of all is to add it to the fuel tank and oil as directed. Then start the engine and run it until it is out of fuel. As it burns, it cleans engine components, leaving them in good shape for the winter ahead.

Lubricate chains and grease joints and bearings and replace or clean air, fuel and oil filters. It's easy to forget them, but clean filters protect the motor and maximize efficient operation. A few dollars spent replacing a filter now beats hundreds to replace a motor later.

Finally, before you walk away, jot down what you did and when in a notebook. Place the notebook where you can find it next spring. If there is a problem when you go to start the motor, you'll know where to begin troubleshooting. More likely, there won't be a problem, but there will be a lot of satisfaction, thanks to time well spent now.

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