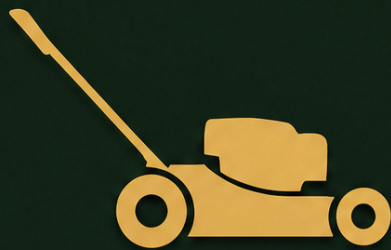


# THE 20-YEAR MOWER BUYING GUIDE

How to Buy Once, Maintain It Right, and Never Get Stuck Again



## BUY RIGHT

Know what matters

## CHOOSE RIGHT

Brands pros buy

## OWN RIGHT

20-year plan

The definitive homeowner's guide to outdoor power equipment

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## INTRODUCTION

## Why Most Homeowners Replace Their Mower Every 5 Years (And How to Stop)

There is a mower sitting in a garage somewhere in America right now that is 24 years old. It starts on the second pull every spring. The deck has a few dings in it. The paint wore off the handle years ago. The guy who owns it has never once considered replacing it, because it has never given him a reason to.

That mower is not an accident. It is the result of one good decision made a long time ago, followed by a few hours of basic maintenance every year. That is the entire secret.

Manufacturer surveys suggest the average riding mower gets replaced every four to five years. Most homeowners do not want to replace it — they are replacing it because the one they bought stopped working and fixing it costs more than they are willing to spend on a machine they already resent. So they go back to the same store, look at the same shelf, and make the same mistake again.



*The single most important idea in this guide: the price of a mower is not what you pay for it. It is what you pay for it, divided by how many years it runs. Buy a machine that lasts twenty years and the math works out in your favor almost every time.*

What follows is a buying framework built around one question: if you are going to spend money on a mower, how do you make sure you only have to do it once? The answer requires looking past the deck size and horsepower number on the sticker — marketing figures designed to move product — and being honest about what your property demands, how much maintenance you will commit to, and what a broken mower actually costs you when it dies on a Saturday morning in July.

## Three Numbers That Explain Why Most Homeowners Are Stuck In a Replacement Cycle

### 4–5 Years

#### Average riding mower replacement cycle

Manufacturer survey data — most homeowners replace because the machine failed, not because they wanted to upgrade.

### \$625–\$2,500

#### Cost of a hydrostatic transmission replacement, installed

Current repair shop data. On a machine worth \$1,800 new, this repair almost never gets made — the mower gets replaced instead.

### 5–10 Hours

#### Break-in window that determines long-term engine life

Briggs, Kawasaki, and Kohler all specify a break-in oil change in this window. Most homeowners skip it entirely.

PART ONE

# KNOW WHAT YOU'RE BUYING

*Engines, Decks, Transmissions, and the Truth Behind the Spec Sheet*