

Bluestem Breezes  
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## **Lawn Mowing, A Science?**

For me, mowing our yard is an excellent means for my nearly albino arms to see a little sun. For others, the lawn is a work of art.

Regardless of which category you may fall in to, there are valid points to consider as you groom your yard.

**Mowing Height** – Correct mowing height may be determined by the species of grass. Cool-season grasses (bluegrass, tall fescue) are mowed higher because of their erect growth habit. Warm-season grasses (bermudagrass, zoysiagrass) should be mowed shorter because their leaves are produced on runners which grow close to the ground.

**Mowing Frequency** – A good rule of thumb is the “one-third rule” which simply says only remove one-third of the grass height during any one mowing. This will also assist in maintaining your mower and eliminating the need to remove clippings.

**Mower Blade Sharpness** – A sharp blade is essential for a quality mowing job by cutting cleanly and easily. It will also require less fuel.

**Mowing Pattern** – Alternate mowing direction with each mowing to reduce soil compaction. Wear from the mower wheels will be more uniformly distributed over the lawn. Grass blades tend to lean in the mowing direction, so mowing with a different direction may prevent this.

**Mower Safety** – Always keep safety in mind when using a power mower. Read the operator’s manual for safety instructions. Don’t leave a running engine unattended. Refuel the engine only when it is shut off and cool. Stop engine and disconnect spark plug wire before working on engine or blade. Keep the mower in good repair and adjustment.

The operator must be familiar with the equipment and use good judgment. Keep feet and hands away from blades when starting and running engine. Wear sturdy shoes and long pants. Operate mower at a safe speed of travel. Always push mower rather than pull it toward you. Wear goggles when operating cord trimmers and power edgers.

Pick up all debris before each mowing. Keep children and pets a safe distance away from mowers. Watch your footing on steep slopes and wet grass.

More information on mowing is available in Extension’s publication “Mowing Your Lawn”. Contact the Extension Office (215 Kansas, Courthouse, Alma; kamayer@ksu.edu; 765-3821) for your free copy.

Archives of “Bluestem Breezes” may be found at [wabaunsee.ksu.edu](http://wabaunsee.ksu.edu).