

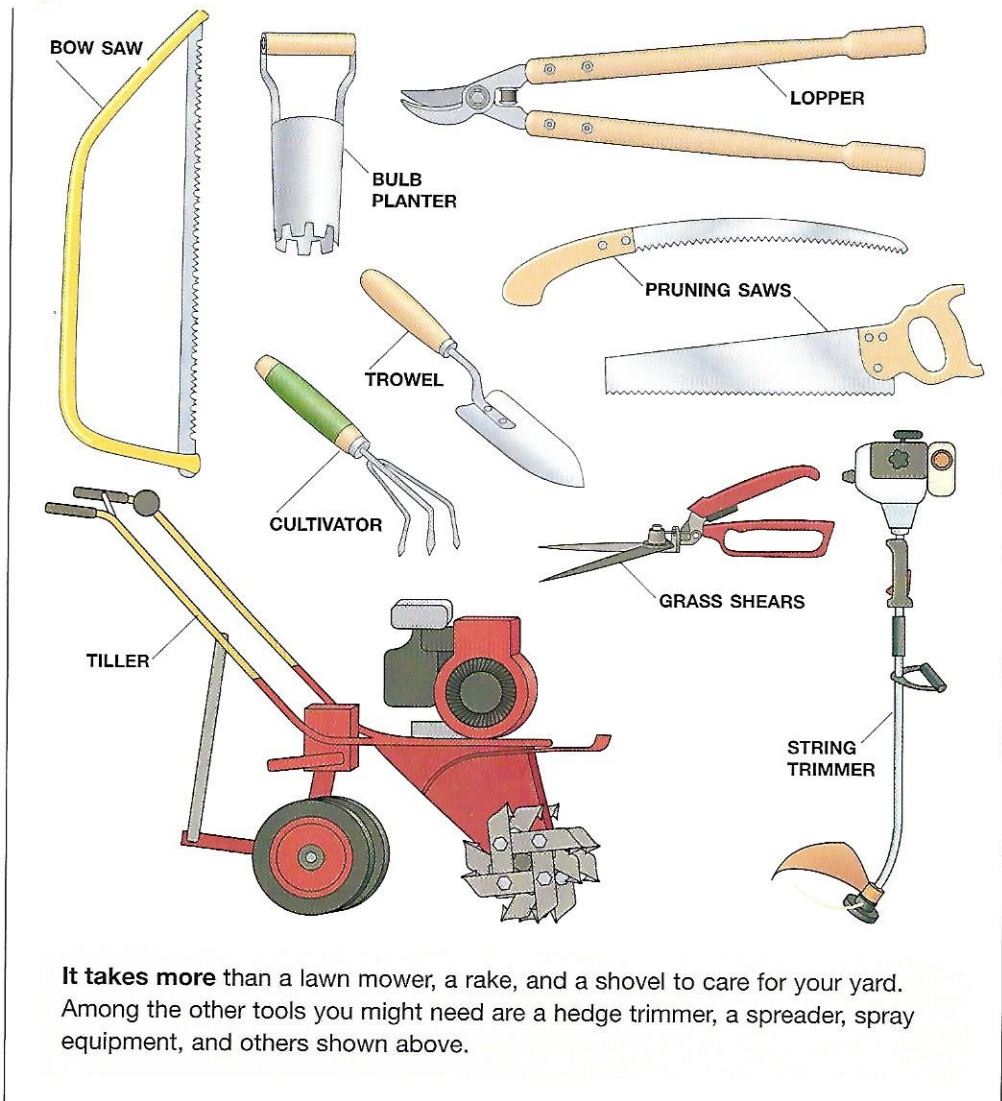
Maintaining Tools

Tools will last longer and do their job better if you maintain them properly after use and when you put them away for the season. At the end of the day, tools should always be put away clean and dry. Wipe off dirt and moisture with a rag; dip small tools in and out of a bucket of sharp builder's sand to get the dirt off them. Don't scrape metal tools with other metal tools, because it will scratch their finish and encourage rust. You can buy or make a tool called a wood man (a wooden spatula made for this purpose) to scrape off dried mud. Saws and bladed tools should be stored so that their sharpened edges won't rub against other metal tools or abrasive surfaces. Sharpen them often. Most saw blades can be touched up with a mill or bastard file. Most cutting tools, such as chisels, can be touched up on a small grinding stone.

End-of-Season Maintenance

Before you put your tools away in the fall or winter, remove any rust using a wire brush. Wooden handles that are cracked can be glued or taped for a temporary fix, but they will need to be replaced in a season or two. Clean and coat wooden handles with boiled linseed oil; give very old handles several coats of varnish, sanding them between coats, to rejuvenate them. Clean all metal parts thoroughly, polish them with steel wool, and apply a protective coating such as mineral oil to prevent rusting. Any moving parts should be coated thoroughly with lubricating oil. Drain gasoline from fuel tanks of powered tools.

Special Tools



It takes more than a lawn mower, a rake, and a shovel to care for your yard. Among the other tools you might need are a hedge trimmer, a spreader, spray equipment, and others shown above.

Mower Maintenance

USE: ► adjustable wrench • blade sharpener • screwdrivers • socket wrenches • wire brush • funnel • siphon • cleaning rags • gas can • safety goggles



1 Replace the mower's air filter per manufacturer's recommendations—it is held in place with a spring clamp or screws.



2 At least once a year, remove the blade for sharpening, and replace the engine oil to get the most out of the engine's life.



3 The blade housing should be scraped clean after each use. Also scrape off dried grass on the clipping bags and chutes.