

Hustler M1 and TrimStar Mowers

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Late this summer I was selected to field test both the Hustler M1 trim mower and the Hustler TrimStar walk-behind mower. At first glance, both machines appeared to be well-built. As I have never used a walk-behind mower, I had no expectations for it, and the only trim mower I have used is a homeowner version. Both machines came to me fully assembled and ready to use, so in the middle of the workday I picked them up and put them to work.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOHN HAGOOD.



The Hustler TrimStar mower features comfortable, easy-to-use handlebar grips and cruise control. The tester used it for a bank on the front lawn of one of his client's and was impressed by the hillside stability.



Hustler's M1 trim mower tackled thick grass in an area that was line-trimmed once a month and never bogged down.

The first mission for the M1 was an area of a lawn that is line-trimmed only once a month. This little mower sure impressed me; it tackled the thick grass and never bogged in the least. It's an easy mower to operate. The height adjustments and handling of the mower were easy, and it cranked consecutively on the first pull. The M1 cut the grass at a nice and even consistency, and it came with a bag for clipping collection and a shoot plug for mulching, which both worked very nice and were simple in the design for switching between the two. I don't know if the designer thought of it, but I also found out by accidentally forgetting to put in the shoot plug that it becomes a rear discharge, and with the metal cover flap it directed the clipping down right behind the mower. My favorite feature was the ability to turn off the blade while the mower was still running. That made it really nice to change locations on the lawn with the self-propel feature and not worry about the mower blades throwing debris.

One of the first things I noticed about the TrimStar was the control panel and how easy it was to understand the function of each item. The first job I took the TrimStar to was one with a large bank in the front of the lawn. The first thing I learned on that job was I am getting old—I could not keep up with the mower, as the power and stability on that hillside was so good. I had to request a sulky so I could properly use this machine. After receiving the sulky from Hustler and putting it on, I immediately found out how much machine I truly had here. As I had never used a walk-behind and had no bad habits from other mowers, I took to the TrimStar easily. The handlebar grips were comfortable and easy to use. I did learn fast that while turning I had a tendency to twist the grips and almost lose control, but after a bit of practice I overcame that and began to love the TrimStar. The cruise control was a nice feature as you didn't wear your wrist out keeping the grip twisted forward on long straight lines. Another nice feature is the deck lift: set the height adjustment, lower the lever and your off and running. The TrimStar handled and maneuvered with such ease it got into some areas that I couldn't with my full-size zero-turn radius mower. By cutting down on line trim areas it cut my mowing time also. The ease of access to the maintenance areas on the mower was tremendous, with no tools necessary to get to the belts over the deck and just a couple of small, easy-to-get-to bolts to get to the rear wheel hydros.

Overall, both the M1 and the TrimStar mowers seemed to be well-built, easy to handle and easy to maintain. It was a pleasure to use both these mowers, and I would recommend them to anyone from the beginner to the old pro.

Think you've got what it takes to put some new gear through its paces? Can you write a complete sentence and craft a piece like this? Contact Editor Amy Hill at ahill@MooseRiverMedia.com to get your name on our list of *Turf* magazine Field Test experts!