

Is Switching to Propane on Your Radar?



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Ever considered switching to propane-fueled mowers? Today, there are more than 135 propane mower model options available. It takes some homework to run the numbers and determine what your savings would be. Contractors can take advantage of fixed prices and incentives to switch their fleet. These www.expired-link.com members share their curiosity about making the leap into propane.

M0turkey: I would never be interested in switching, but after noticing the ads for cash incentives for switching to propane, I'm just wondering if any of you actually run propane-powered mowers, and if so, how are they working out for you? I don't believe I've ever actually seen one in use in my area.

sbrickhouse89: I have a landscape company in eastern North Carolina, and have switched all Hustlers and Wrights to propane and saved between \$12,000 and \$15,000 in the past year from fuel savings. (Haven't ran exact numbers.) Plus we have lengthened oil changes from 50 hours to 100 hours. Don't think we will be going back to dirty gasoline any time soon.

BigDreamsLawn&Landscapes: We run propane in Charlotte, North Carolina. I initially purchased the mower because I got an extremely good deal. I saved a lot on fuel when prices were \$3.75 a gallon for gasoline and I was only paying \$2.49 a gallon for propane. I can get about one to two more hours per two tanks on propane than I can on a regular gasoline engine. Huge benefit is that it burns so much cleaner. I can easily go 100 hours on an oil change when I normally change with gasoline around 50 hours. The oil still looks very clean at 100 hours. I do not have to worry about ethanol problems either in the mower.

AwilsonCreativeServices: I, too, am very interested in this subject. I am a very small operation (three zero-turn mowers and about 25 mixed accounts) but have also thought of converting my mini-skid to propane, as it is used probably more than the mowers. Plus, I am a supporter of cleaner burning

fuel/local and domestic products/being green. A local large mowing outfit that was awarded the big municipal contract runs all propane Exmarks, and I feel certain that it helped them clinch the deal. There is a propane supply company near me that I have spoken with who will supposedly convert my mowers and install a fueling tank for free if I buy either 500 or 1,000 gallons from them a year. Their deal is that they peg the price of propane \$1 below regular unleaded gas. When asked about it, the salesman said that landscapers would be burning the fuel in their "offseason," when it's cheaper, and they would be able to service more customers more months of the year. I fuel my equipment with non-ethanol 90 octane carried by a local oil company, and it's about the same price as diesel usually is.

PicturePerfectLawns: Lots of propane companies in Texas. I'm making the switch next year. Original poster, why did you say you would never switch? You get lower, locked-in prices than gasoline, cleaner burning, and every time you see the inside of a propane engine it's clean as a whistle. No carbon build up, cleaner internal engine parts = longer life span. Savings in fuel expenses. Healthier. And you can mow all year with them.

GoPappy: Two huge advantages of propane are 1.) it lasts forever and doesn't go bad, and 2.) you can buy and store it in large quantities if you have a large propane tank, and can then transfer it from the large tank to a smaller tank on a truck or trailer.

djagusch: Propane has 28 percent less energy in a gallon vs. gasoline. Propane reps say it's 1 to 1 ratio, which negates the energy difference. The biggest issue for me is the fuel supply. One poster here nailed the issue. He said they have propane at \$1 less than gas? Why? It's because they are price fixing to make it appear like somewhat of a cost savings while they increase their margins.

PicturePerfectLawns: I see things in a similar way with a twist. If we look at the "retail" numbers, propane in my opinion actually costs more – \$2.99 per gallon just as an example. The savings comes when you install a 1,000-gallon propane tank directly outside of your shop. The refill price is locked in annually.

djagusch: I can buy 1,000 gallons at a lower rate than that for my house. Here is the problem: They don't give away a refueling station. If you lease one (for nothing basically) you're stuck buying the propane at their rate, which they price fix the dollar less than gas that the other guy mentioned. You could go buy a refueling station, which if I remember right is \$7,500 range. You can't legally just hook up some valves and hoses to refill, according to the propane companies around here.

PicturePerfectLawns: You raised a good point. It's not as simple as buying a tank and filling. Propane has its advantages and disadvantages. But the way I see it, it was beginning to look like alternative fuel was the future, so I've been on the fence.