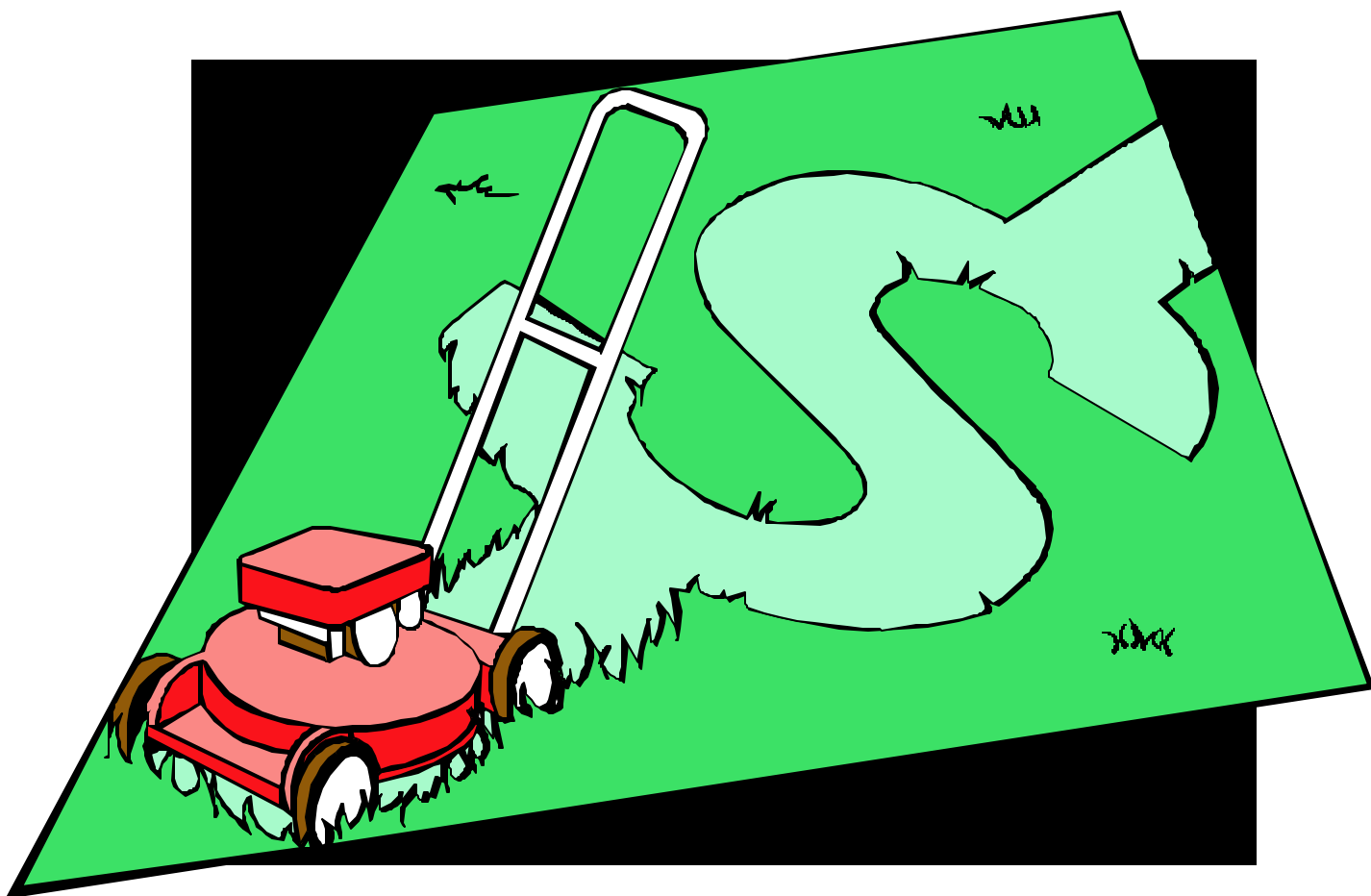


# MOWING FOR MONEY:

A Dollar and Sense Guide To Lawn Care



LEADER'S GUIDE  
12-14 Year Olds

**UF** UNIVERSITY of  
**FLORIDA**  
| IFAS Extension

Florida 4-H Horticulture Program



## PREFACE

Statistics show that over 60,000 mowing accidents occur every year. That's 60,000 too many for the faculty and staff of the University of Florida. Sixty-thousand accidents that could possibly have been avoided with some simple instructions and awareness. We decided to do something about it.

*Mowing for Money: A Dollar and Sense Guide to Lawn Care* is the result. Through the Environmental Landscape Management and 4-H Plant Sciences and Preparing Florida's Youth for the World of Work Design Teams, we've developed educational materials and this accompanying Leader's Guide that combine useful safety information, simple and easy to use information on turfgrasses, techniques for maintaining a healthy lawn and a framework for creating a business based on other information in the program.

If youth think the only thing they need to know about lawn care is to mow their lawn when the grass gets too high, this program is for them. Literally, there is a whole other world under our feet. Lawns are teeming with life -- plants, insects, worms, fungi -- some of these are harmful and some beneficial. Each living creature plays a part in the life of your lawn. Through understanding this environment, we all will benefit. The greener grass **can** be on your side of the fence for a change, while the environment benefits, too.

The program, however, is primarily geared toward youth 12 or over. See the section of the introduction titled "About teaching youth lawn care" for information with regard to child labor laws. To reinforce this information, the following statement can be found in both the accompanying Workbook and Business Recordbook:

Under State of Florida labor laws, children cannot mow for hire under any circumstance unless they are at least 14 years of age. In addition, 14 and 15 year-olds are prohibited from operating any power-driven machinery, except power mowers with a blade of 40 inches or less.

Under Federal labor laws, children under 16 generally may not be employed to work in the area of lawn maintenance or care. However the Federal laws will not apply to all employers and will not prevent a child from mowing lawns as an independent contractor. An employer should know whether the Federal Act is applicable to that particular employer and will be responsible for any violations of the Act. A child mowing lawns for pay in a community using the child's own supplies, materials and equipment, setting their own schedule and directing their own work and who is not employed by a particular person or commercial enterprise, will probably be considered an independent contractor and not within the scope of the Federal Act.

Wherever possible, we have geared activities found in the Leader's Guide for youth 12 and older when they do not violate (interfere) with these parameters. After all, one is never too young or too old to learn about safety and the environment.

We hope you enjoy *Mowing for Money* and sincerely hope that all lawns (and quite possibly youth's wallets) will be greener for it!

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# ***ABOUT MOWING FOR MONEY***

## **AGE OR GRADE LEVELS**

This project was developed for youth ages 12-18 (refer to "About teaching youth lawn care" for more information regarding age restrictions in this Introduction before beginning this project). Both group and individual activities encourage participation and action in all aspects of this program. Teachers and volunteers are encouraged to select learning activities that are most suitable to their youth. The overall intent is to facilitate learning and to spark creativity in both teachers and youth.

## **CONTENT**

The following are components of the *Mowing for Money* project:

- **LEADER'S GUIDE**  
This three-ring notebook contains complete, easy-to-read lesson outlines. Each lesson provides a variety of activities that can be conducted depending upon the time frame devoted to this project. Each lesson is prefaced with a lesson outline and the **BACKGROUND BASICS** that help you focus on the overall concepts. Each lesson concludes with discussion questions for youth to **REFLECT** and **APPLY** the knowledge and skills they have gained. The Application Activities are two-fold in that youth in this project are first assisted in applying the knowledge and skills they are learning to their immediate project activity of starting their own lawn care business. Creative projects, experiments and flashcards are just a few of the activities found in the Leader's Guide. Secondly, they are assisted with applying the many life skills taught in this project to others areas of their life.
- **WORKBOOK**  
This 40-page project Workbook guides those youth who are exploring this learn-to-earn project through the basic knowledge and skills needed to be successful entrepreneurs! Many older or mature youth may be able to learn a lot on their own and may only need to ask an adult for assistance only when needed.
- **RECORDBOOK**  
This 20-page Recordbook provides a financial framework for youth who begin their own business!

# LESSON PROFILES

## **Lesson 1    Getting Started**

Lesson 1 is intended to get youth thinking about all aspects of the *Mowing for Money* project. The best place to start is at the beginning: what you know, what you don't know and what you think you know. Activities focus on identifying tasks involved in managing a lawn care business, evaluating the resources available to youth and making appropriate decisions regarding their own enterprise.

## **Lesson 2    Safety Patrol**

In one year, over 60,000 mowing accidents occur in the US alone. Needless to say, safety is one of the most important components of this program. "Safety Patrol" activities are intended for ages 12 and up because it is never too early to learn how to be safe. Activities focus on identifying danger spots on lawn mowers and in yards, describing safe and unsafe mowing practices and developing an emergency plan in case of an accident.

## **Lesson 3    Tools of the Trade**

While a lawn mower is probably the most visible tool in lawn care, it is not the only tool. This lesson teaches that responsible maintenance and inventory of tools is a required part of lawn care. Activities focus on identifying lawn care tools, describing how, why and under what circumstances tools are used, shopping for the best buys and how to perform basic maintenance.

## **Lesson 4    Mow like a Pro!**

Quite often, the difference between an amateur and a pro is that the pro knows exactly why he or she undertakes a certain action. In this lesson, youth learn how grass grows, how it should be cut and why it should be cut that way. Activities focus on identifying different grass species, their characteristics and uses, discussing ways to avoid injury to plants, shrubs and trees and determining different environmentally friendly ways to utilize yard waste.

## **Lesson 5    Trouble-Shooting**

"The best laid plans of mice and men" always seem to go awry. Rakes break, harmful insects show up and weeds take hold. Lesson 5 examines some of the forces that lawn care managers deal with on a daily basis. Activities focus on identifying and describing turfgrass weeds, diseases and insects, suggesting ways to combat those that are harmful and handling on-site equipment breakdowns.

## **Lesson 6 Business Basics**

Many people assume they can start their own business simply because they are knowledgeable or skilled at a certain task or in a certain field. Most don't realize there is a "business" side that can be daunting and potentially detrimental if not incorporated from the start up of a business. Lesson 6 makes youth think about this aspect. Activities focus on identifying different costs associated with running a business, calculating a customer fee, describing ways to attract and keep customers and keeping business records.