



### A weekly question/answer column

## Do You Have Tips For Safely Operating My Snow Blower?

*Wade Bitner\* answers:*

Snow blowers are a common alternative to removing snow with a shovel. They come in small, lightweight versions or large tracked units with great capacity. Regardless of the size of your snow blower, safety is the greatest concern, especially when clearing a plugged machine. Injuries have been sustained when fingers slip into the rotating bed when removing packed snow. Use caution while trying to unplug the blades. Here are some tips for safer snow blower operation.

- When clearing a tightly packed plug, turn the blades off and stop the engine to prevent injury. Use a stick rather than your fingers to poke the snow out.
- Decrease the forward speed, allowing the blower to clear heavy snow from the machine. Stop and start the machine to clear it rather than just moving the machine forward into heavy snow.
- Begin snow removal when snow is four inches deep to prevent plugging, even if you have to repeat the operation before it stops snowing. This will make the snow easier to remove and plug the blower less frequently.
- Use boots or traction shoes to prevent slipping as you use the blower. It is a machine and not a toy, so treat it as such.
- Take the time necessary to do a good job.
- When the job is completed, turn the engine off and clean the machine with a stick.
- Fill the fuel tank with gas to prevent water condensation in the tank. Then your machine will be ready for the next snow storm.

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\* Wade Bitner is Utah State University Extension Salt Lake County Horticulturist