

## Using Hedge Trimmers Safely<sup>1</sup>

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### PRECAUTIONS BEFORE USING A TRIMMER

- When buying a trimmer, select one with the cutting teeth and guards close enough together so that fingers can't fit between them.
  - Select a trimmer that has two handles, including a wide forward handle high above the cutting blades.
  - Select a trimmer that is lightweight and easy to handle.
  - Read the owner's manual to familiarize yourself with the machine and its use.
  - Check the trimmer carefully for loose screws, bolts, and damaged or broken parts. Replace parts or make necessary repairs before you use the trimmer.
  - Sharpen the blades if necessary.
  - If not double insulated be sure that you use a three-wire extension cord equipped with a three-prong plug. Be sure the outlet you use is the grounded type. Use an outlet with ground fault protection for maximum safety.
  - Be sure that young adults are properly instructed on use of the trimmer and they are physically and mentally mature enough to operate it. Never allow children to use the trimmer.
  - Clear the working area of children, pets, and other bystanders.
  - Inspect the shrubbery carefully for hidden wires, posts, or other trash.
- If trimming taller shrubbery, stand on a stepladder or other firm support. Avoid the use of unstable support such as chairs or ladders.
  - Keep your hands and body away from the blades.
  - Keep the cord of electric models away from the trimmer to avoid damaging or cutting it.
  - Work slowly and deliberately. Plan your cuts before you make them.
  - Take an occasional rest break to avoid fatigue.
  - Stop the engine or unplug electric models before cleaning or adjusting.
  - Never leave the trimmer unattended, to prevent children playing with it.
  - Store the trimmer safely out of the reach of children.

### OPERATING THE TRIMMER

- Always wear long pants, long-sleeved shirt, gloves, eye protection, and ear protection.
- Do not operate the trimmer above chest height.

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