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Small Engine Care & Maintenance

Did you know? The gasoline we purchase today is made up of many different chemicals, or components depending on the time of the year. In the fall and winter fuel manufacturers reformulate fuel by adding oxygen-bearing ether compounds. These compounds have a relatively high octane blending value to help lower emissions and optimize performance and make engines easier to start in colder weather. In the northern part of the US one of these additives is Ethanol.

Is there a problem with Ethanol?

Yes. Ethanol attracts and absorbs moisture. This rapidly degrades fuel that is exposed to air. It also adds debris in the form of rust and oxides from storage containers and metal components to the fuel system. Ethanol is corrosive especially to brass. This causes brass components to oxidize and produce deposits easier and faster than ever. It is the debris created from this process that blocks the tiny holes in small carburetors.

Should I be concerned about my engine?

Maybe, in all newer small engines, manufacturers like Honda are having to comply with EPA requirements, this has forced them to use carburetors with smaller passageways for the fuel. These small passageways are much more susceptible to varnish and buildup that occurs with gasoline that has aged or collected moisture.

What is old fuel?

Gasoline will oxidize and deteriorate in storage. Old gas causes hard starting and leaves gum deposits that clog fuel systems. If the gas in your engine deteriorates during storage, you may need to have the carburetor and other fuel system components serviced or replaced.

What can I do to prevent this?

As recommended by Honda and other small engine manufacturers, you can extend fuel storage life by adding a fuel stabilizer that is formulated for this purpose. West Coast recommends the use of "Sea-Foam" which can be purchased at any automotive supply store.

1. Run the engine frequently so fresh fuel will be added on a regular basis.
2. Shutdown the engine by turning the fuel on/off valve to off.
This allows the fuel in the carburetor to be used up.
3. When refueling use a funnel with a paper filter to pre-filter fuel.
4. Store your fuel in plastic gas cans, not metal.

Other fuel info is available at:

http://www.exxon.com/exxon_gas/web-faqs-exxon.html

<http://www.faqs.org/faqs/autos/gasoline-faq/part1/>



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5009 W. Aster Drive
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Phone: 602-616-5703
Fax: 623-594-2064

E-mail: extricationconcepts@cox.net

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FRED DIMAS SR. OWNER/DEALER
5009 W. Aster Dr.
Glendale, AZ 85304
Cell: 602-616-5703
Fax: 602-439-2669
E-mail: extricationconcepts@cox.net

**ADAM DIMAS SALES REP. &
CERTIFIED SERVICE TECH**
10504 S. 271st.Ave.
Buckeye, AZ 85326
Cell: 602-390-8035
Fax: 623-474-5019
E-mail: adamdimas@yahoo.com

**FRED DIMAS JR. SALES REP. &
CERTIFIED SERVICE TECH.**
19725 W. Amelia Ave.
Buckeye, AZ 85326
Cell: 602-319-3426
Fax: 623-853-2122
E-mail: enguno@yahoo.com

**DANA LARGE SALES REP. &
CERTIFIED SERVICE TECH**
19725 W. Amelia Ave.
Buckeye, AZ 85326
Cell: 602-799-6115
Fax: 623-853-2122
E-mail: danalarge@yahoo.com

