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[An alternative to hours spent pushing lawnmower](#)

By Steve Burns, Capital News contributor

This weekend I finished mowing my lawn for hopefully the last time this year.

Unlike many of my diligent neighbours, I allowed our grass to become a field so I am sure everyone cheered when I finally cut it.

You might find this ridiculous but I wondered if there would be a way of eliminating "mow the lawn" from my list of duties.



The Robomower. Contributed

I have considered outsourcing to a lawn maintenance firm, which is one viable alternative.

Then I started to do some research into other alternatives...It does look like technology has produced another viable alternative to having all of us worry about mowing the lawn.

Apparently the new Robomower (www.robomowcanada.com) can take care of it for me.

The Robomower was invented by Systematic Solutions Ltd., which has a colourful history of creating innovative products.

The Robomower is a fully automatic, battery-powered, lawn mower with an on-board navigation system.

It uses rechargeable batteries and mulches as it mows.

The product literally mows your lawn at the touch of a button.

I found it really hard to believe that a lawnmower, no matter how computerized and intelligent, could handle all of the curves and turns in my lawn.

However, my research shows that the Robomower uses wire forms as a virtual fence, similar to the technology used in invisible pet fencing systems.

The perimeter wire can be pegged to the ground below the grass level, or it can be buried just under the surface.

The wires can stay put all year long, even through the winter.

I reviewed a number of videos of the product showing how it handles the perimeter by turning around and going in another direction when it hits the perimeter wire.

The Robomower's on-board navigation system is used to constantly measure the dimensions of the lawn to make sure it covers the whole yard.

Yes, I will still need to remove the obvious obstacles from the lawn, such as basketballs, bikes, flower pots, etc.

Even so, the front and rear bumpers have low force sensors so when the mower bumps into anything it changes direction.

The Robomower takes two to three times longer to mow your lawn.

This is fine with me as it frees me up to do other things.

The Robomower doesn't like the rainy weather we have been having lately so trying to cut the grass for four hours straight without a downpour might be difficult.

One of the reasons that it takes so long to cut the grass is that the mower moves in overlapping "V" patterns, which allows the grass to be cut from several angles.

This should produce a well manicured lawn. I like the idea of the triple-chamber mulching system that creates fine mulch, which means that I will never have to rake, bag grass or throw it in the compost bin again.

The Robomower is very quiet, which means that your grass can be pretty much cut at any time of the day or night without your neighbours complaining.

The mower will stop on its own when it has completed cutting your grass.

It is also environmentally friendly, with no gas or oil to worry about. I can't imagine the privilege of not overflowing another lawnmower gas tank again!

The Robomower seems pretty safe as it has a child lock, bumper sensors, and a drop off mechanism that automatically stops the blades if the front end of the mower is lifted upward.

Despite being in the Guinness Book of World Records for one of the most outstanding inventions, there are some drawbacks to this new technology.

For instance, although the mower weighs about 34 kilograms it wouldn't be that difficult to steal.

Although there is a theft-guard system it should have an alarm on it to alert you while you are otherwise occupied that your lawn mower is being removed from your front lawn.

However, I suspect that with all of your neighbours watching this invention outside as you go about your other tasks it will be well protected.

In fact, likely it will be your neighbours snatching it from you to do their own lawn.

If you insist on having neat stripes on your lawn from how you cut the grass on an angle, then the Robomower will disappoint you.

The V-cut technology causes the robot to move around your lawn in many directions, which often doesn't leave any stripes at all.

The Robomower is expensive at \$1,600 per unit.

The product is sold and serviced locally by Kelowna Chain Saws, 1060 Leathead Road, Kelowna, B.C., 491-9230 and comes with a 60 day money back guarantee and a limited 24 month warranty.

They also have a demonstration unit, which is available for \$1,000.

I see the Robomower as a technology of convenience no different than our dishwasher.

While mowing the lawn gets us outside for some needed exercise, I think it is great for technology to increase the control you have over how you spend your time.

However, I have one critical suggestion to all of the men out there.

You will still need to pull yourself away from the NFL game or the World Series to move the lawnmower around to cut the front and back grass and to use your trimmer around the perimeter.

One thing I am sure of with this product—if any of us men are caught watching sports while our grass is being cut by the Robomower I can guarantee that it will be returned that day in exchange for the old faithful push reel lawnmower! Invest your incremental time savings wisely.

With Christmas fast approaching, perhaps a Robomower will be under your Christmas tree this season.

Sorry, it can't handle driveway snow removal – at least not yet.

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