

Wheels: Annie has a question about gas additives. “I have read that gasoline additives cause gas to go “bad” after 30 days resulting in hard to start situations in vehicles and lawnmowers. When does the 30-day period start - when the additives are blended in or when you make the purchase? Do you have good gas on day 30 and bad gas on day 31? Can good gas be mixed with bad to “refresh” it and make the whole lot good again or does mixing just dilute the bad gas? An illness has caused a family member to not drive for over 30 days and drought has caused me not to start my lawnmower. What to do?

Halderman: Your gasoline is likely OK if it has been stored in a sealed container. Gasoline is composed of many different hydrocarbons and some evaporate easily so the engine can start and others require high temperatures before they evaporate. Gasoline can be stored without noticeable difference in performance for about 90 days. At Sinclair College, we add a gasoline stabilizer to all of the gasoline we use in our fleet of over 70 new vehicles that we use for training. Gasoline stabilizer is available at most discount stores in the automotive department or at lawnmower sales and service stores. According to gasoline experts, the biggest harm to gasoline occurs if water is exposed to the gasoline and microbes start to grow at the junction between the gasoline and water. The microbes live in the water and eat the gasoline (hydrocarbons). Always store gasoline in an approved container away from water.

I suggest that you simply take the vehicle to the gas station and fill the tank with fresh gasoline. This will help make the engine run OK even if the lighter parts of the gasoline have evaporated. Pour the gas for the lawnmower into the car tank and refill the gas can. Add gasoline stabilizer and keep the lawnmower tank filled during storage over the winter and you should not have any problems.

