

Using Mower Starter Woes to Your Advantage

By Mike Schroeder

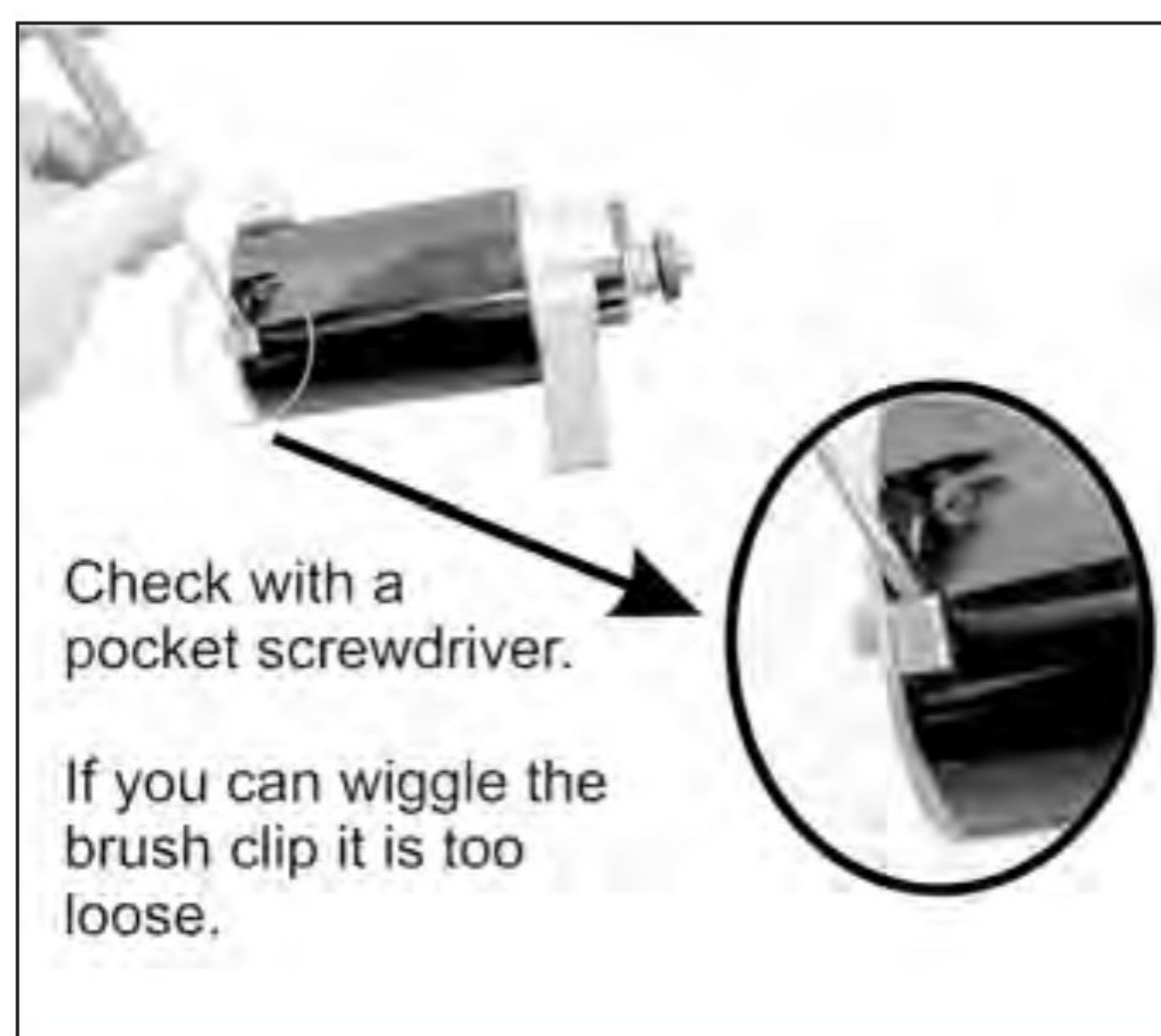
With lawn and garden season now in full swing, several problems with Briggs & Stratton starters have come to our attention.

Several of the replacement starters we have sold have come back to us in a matter of days with warranty problems. After a conversation with one of the customers we discovered what initiated the problem. He stated that after he installed the starter and tried to crank the engine, he saw sparks coming from the starter. He pointed out the area on the starter from which the sparks were coming; it was near the ground brush clips, which are visible from the outside of the starter. After careful examination of the starter housing, brush holder and ground brush clips, it was determined that the manufacturer of the starter had cut the slots in the field case too deeply to accept the brush holder and clips to the proper depth.

The original design of the starter in this area was to allow the com-end plate to squeeze the ground brush clips against the field case, thus making a tight ground connection. With the slots cut too deeply, the clips are not squeezed tightly enough, resulting in a poor ground connection and consequently starter failure.

After contacting our supplier about this problem, it was determined that not all of their starters had this problem, so it would depend on who the original vendor or manufacturer was.

Our advice is to check every one of the starters you sell with a pocket screwdriver to ensure that the ground clips are tight in the housing. If they are not, you will more than likely see the starter come back to you burned up. It is also our advice to contact your supplier about this situation before attempting to fix it yourself, as this may void the warranty that accompanies the unit.



Another situation that has come to our attention during the last grass-cutting season, was the fact that mower manufacturers are using a starter that is not large enough for the engine horsepower application. We can only speculate why they would do this, but our belief is that money figures into the equation. We have learned to ask the customer for the horsepower and the number of cylinders in the engine when they bring their starter in for repair. We have established a rule-of-thumb for sizing these starters to the engine horsepower: Up to 14 HP, we use the 3 3/4 inch long field case. Above 14 HP, we use the 4 1/4 inch long field case.



When asked why the starter worked as long as it did, our response is that the starter will work in ideal conditions (new battery, new cables and connections, new solenoid contacts, etc.). On more than one occasion, our customers have stated that the mower never did crank fast enough, even when it was brand new. This situation is to our financial benefit as long as we recognize the problem.

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