

LAWN CARE WASTE REDUCTION TIPS

How do you dispose of grass clippings after mowing the lawn?

- Put them in the garbage?
- Put them on the curb for collection?
- Compost them?

Why not try to
"LEAVE IT ON THE LAWN!" It will:

- Benefit the environment.
 - Improve your lawn.
 - Save time.
 - Save landfill space.

WHY YOU SHOULD "LEAVE IT ON THE LAWN"

- Benefits the environment by reducing the amount and frequency of fertilizer application. Grass clippings are 80% water and contain 2- 4% nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and other nutrients. This is also good for you (lower fertilizer costs).
- Improves your lawn. Leaving grass clippings on the lawn returns nutrients to the soil resulting in healthier turf.
- Saves time. Since the grass is no longer bagged, fewer stops are required.



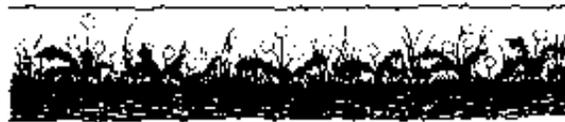
- Reduces the amount of garbage you throw out. Grass clippings can account for as much as 10% of the garbage we produce.



HOW TO "LEAVE IT ON THE LAWN"

Allow your grass to grow to three inches and then cut no more than one inch off the top. This is the "one-third" rule. This helps develop a deeper root system which is a natural defense against weeds, disease and drought.

During fast growing periods you may have to cut the grass every four to seven days.



COMMON QUESTIONS

1. Do grass clippings cause thatch?

No. Thatch is an accumulation of the "woody" parts of the grass plant: stems, roots and stolons, not the clippings. Thatch is most often caused by over watering and over fertilizing.

2. Isn't it more work to mow the lawn often enough to keep the clippings short?

No. Cutting grass before it is overgrown is easier and faster. Eliminating the time and effort it takes to bag clippings further shortens the mowing time.



3. What if my lawn grows too high between mowings to leave the clippings?

You have several options. You may mow over the clippings to further shred and scatter them. You may raise the mower height so only the top third of the grass blade is removed and then gradually lower the mower height over the span of several mowings.

4. Do I need a mulching mower?

No. Mulching blades and adaptor kits are available for many types of lawn mowers. When it is time to replace your mower, consider purchasing an electric mulching mower.

OTHER USEFUL LAWN INFORMATION

- Watering your lawn is best done in the early morning. An inch of water per week is sufficient for good root growth.



- Fertilizing varies with soil types and growing conditions. The rule of thumb is 2 to 4 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn per year.

- Test the soil to determine your fertilizer need and remember to adjust the pH of the soil to between 6.5 and 7.2. This will improve the efficiency of the nutrients.

Studies have shown that grass recycling reduces the need for fertilizer by 25%.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- 1/4 acre of lawn produces more than 1½ tons of clippings during the growing season!

- The overall time spent on lawn care decreases with the elimination of bagging, even when mowing increases to once every four to seven days!

DO YOU COMPOST YARD DEBRIS?

If you don't want to leave grass clippings on your lawn, try backyard composting.



Composting your organic wastes in the backyard is simple and beneficial.

There are many methods to backyard composting ranging from a simple pile to a purchased composting bin.

For more information on "Leave It On The Lawn" or backyard composting call:

The Composting Hotline at
(518) 402-8705
or write to:
NYSDEC
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-7253

or email us at:
dshmwrr@gw.dec.state.ny.us

and check out our web page at:
www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/294.html

or call your local Cornell Cooperative Extension Office



LEAVE IT ON THE LAWN



(Grass Recycling)

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