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RECYCLE the natural way:

Cut and leave your grass clippings on the lawn.

SAVE cleanup time

REDUCES waste

SAVES money on fertilizer use

CREATES a healthier and greener lawn

Important Notice!

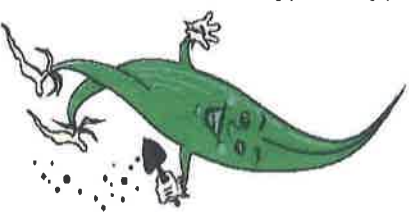
**Grass Clippings Will Eventually Be Removed
from Curbside Pickup — "Cut It and Leave It!"**

Grasscycling is the natural way you can have a green, healthy lawn while spending less time and money!

Sound too good to be true? Well it isn't. Grasscycling is not new. Many parks and golf courses have been practicing grasscycling for years. A typical lawn of 5,000 square feet generates about 75 pounds of clippings per mowing. Years of research have shown that by mowing frequently (5-6 times a month) and not bagging those clippings, lawn owners can save up to 40% of the time they spend on routine lawn care!

Simple Steps for Grasscycling

- Cut only the top 1/3 of the grass blade and leave the clippings on the lawn.
- Mow when the grass is dry to avoid tracking and clumping.
- Keep your mower blade sharp.
- No special equipment is necessary. While mulching mowers are available (and do an excellent job), any conventional mower can grasscycle — just remove the bag! In the case of rear discharge mowers, the exhaust chute must be shut off. Adapter kits or retro-fit kits are available for your conventional mower for about \$15.



Water and Fertilize Less

- When grasscycling is properly done, clippings settle quickly between the growing blades of grass, where they shelter the roots from the sun and conserve moisture. As they break down, they release more moisture as well as nutrients into the soil. This means that the grass needs to be watered less frequently.
- Believe it or not, clippings left on the lawn supply 1/3 or more of the nitrogen need to keep your lawn green and healthy. Don't throw away free fertilizer with your clippings - grasscycle!
- Water in the early morning if possible. Do not over-water; too much water will cause your lawn to develop shallow root systems. Water less frequently but deeper.

What about thatch? *Thatch* is an accumulation of dead roots, stems and rhizomes which are parts of the grass plant that decompose slowly. Clippings are 95% water and are leaves of the grass plant; they decompose too quickly to contribute to thatch.

Proper mowing is the key to grasscycling. Grass should be dry and the mower blades sharp. In the fast-growing season you may have to cut every seven days — but in the slower growing season you might only need to cut your lawn every 7-14 days. ☘

For More Information...

On grasscycling, lawn care or backyard composting, contact the following organizations:

Middlesex County Improvement Authority

Division of Recycling
55 Edgeboro Road
East Brunswick, NJ 08816
1-800-488-MCIA
www.mclauth.com
Email: mclarecy@hotmail.com

Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Middlesex County

42 Riva Avenue
North Brunswick, NJ 08902
732-398-5260
www.rce.rutgers.edu

Middlesex County Division of Solid Waste Management

96 Bayard Street
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
732-745-4170

Or visit these web sites:

The Lawn Institute
www.lawninstitute.com

Lawn Doctor
www.lawndoctor.com

Lawn Care Forum
www.gardenweb.com/forums/lawns

Master Composter
www.mastercomposter.com



Middlesex County Improvement Authority

101 Interchange Plaza, Cranbury, NJ 08512
(609) 655-5141
E-mail: mcladmin@mclauth.com

David B. Crablel

Freeholder Director & MCIA Liaison

MCIA Board:

Leonard J. Roseman, Chairman

Robert J. Mantz

Raymond J. Geneske

Jacque Eaker

Anthony Raczynski

Richard Pucci

Executive Director



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M I D D L E S E X C O U N T Y

CUT IT & LEAVE IT!

GRASSCYCLING...

Save Time - Save Money - Save Tax Dollars!
And get a greener, thicker lawn.



Grasscycle For A Healthier Lawn

Lawn experts at Rutgers University and other research centers have found that:

- Short grass clippings left on your lawn act as a natural fertilizer, producing a healthier lawn that greens earlier in the spring and stays green later into the fall.
- The grass clippings shelter the tender grass roots from the sun and conserve moisture.
- Grass clippings help to create a thicker, healthier lawn that is more resistant to weeds and certain lawn diseases.
- Grasscycling does not cause thatch. Short grass clippings decompose within a few days.

Grasscycling Saves...

Your Time. Experts say we spend as much as 35% of our mowing time getting rid of the clippings: emptying the mower bag, raking, filling the lawn waste bags and dragging them to the curb.

Your Money. You need to water and fertilize your lawn far less frequently, because the clippings conserve moisture and act as a natural fertilizer: they add almost two pounds of valuable nitrogen to every 1,000 square feet of lawn. You will also buy fewer lawn waste bags.

Your Town's Money. An average lawn creates about one ton of clippings each year. Municipal costs for the collection and disposal of grass clippings run about \$100 per ton.

CUT IT & LEAVE IT!

Grasscycling: Don't bag your grass clippings. Leave them on the lawn.



5 Tips For A Great Looking Lawn

1. Any lawn mower will work, but a mulching mower (or a conventional mower with a mulching attachment) will produce the best results.
2. Mow high. Remove only the top 1/3 of the grass blade. You may mow a little more frequently, but your overall lawn care time will decrease.
3. Keep your mower blade sharp. Dull blades tear the grass. This produces ragged, brown edges that invite lawn disease.
4. Water in the morning. Water less frequently but to a depth of one inch. Shallow watering leaves your lawn susceptible to drought stress, disease and insect problems.

5. Don't overfertilize. Grasscycled lawns need fertilizer only once or twice a year.

Other Uses For Grass Clippings

Use them as mulch. Put clippings on the soil around plantings to reduce weed growth, moderate soil temperature and conserve moisture.

Mix them into garden soil. They add valuable nutrients and organic matter.

Add them to your compost pile. Make sure the compost pile consists of 1/3 grass clippings or less, or it may emit odors.

NOTE: For all of these uses, avoid grass that has recently been treated with a herbicide. Wait until the second mowing after treatment to use these clippings.

Middlesex County



Improvement Authority

Every year in New Jersey, dozens of people poison themselves taking care of their own lawns because they don't take product label warnings seriously, and they think that more is better. Lawn additives are powerful chemicals, and you need to use them correctly.

Fertilizer

Too much fertilizer means rapid growth and more mowing. Use soil testing to verify the need for fertilizer; see your County Extension Office for a soil test kit. Fertilize in September and again in October or November for a healthier lawn. This keeps the lawn greener through the winter and strengthens roots for thick growth in the spring without the unwanted long growth caused by spring fertilization. This means fewer mowings, less clippings, and less work. Don't fertilize in summer unless needed; too much can kill cool-season grasses such as fine fescues! Use fertilizer containing at least 50% controlled release nitrogen. The bag may say "water insoluble or W/N", "organic", or "slow release" nitrogen.

When you cut it and leave it, the nitrogen from the grass clippings will add one to two pounds of nitrogen a year to each thousand square feet of lawn. You can adjust the spreader setting to about $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the manufacturer's recommended setting.

Herbicides and insecticides

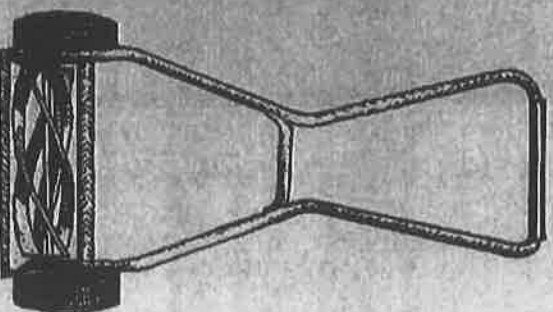
Herbicides remain on the grass for some time, and some make the clippings unsuitable for mulch, so it's important to cut it and leave it when you use weed killers. Too much herbicide can burn the lawn, kill nearby plants, and contaminate waterways. Instead of repeated whole-lawn application of weed killers, try a one-time pre-emergent weed killer and spot application if your lawn has only a few weeds. If you see signs of insect damage, call your extension agent to determine what you need before you select an insecticide. You may find that you don't need any at all.

You can achieve the lawn you want and also protect our environment, when you practice careful turf management, and

Cut it and leave it!

Prepared by the
Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste
In consultation with the
Bureau of Pesticide Operations,
and the Center for Turfgrass Science,
at Rutgers, the State University

Grass



Cut it and leave it

Environmentally Friendly Lawn Care

New Jersey Department
of Environmental Protection
Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste
Bureau of Recycling and Planning



James E. McGreevey Governor
State of New Jersey
Bradley M. Campbell
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of
Environmental Protection

Grass clippings are a major part of New Jersey's municipal solid waste stream. As a New Jersey resident, you are already helping to avoid air pollution and wasted resources by recycling. You can do more by reducing waste at the source. Leave the grass clippings on your lawn when you mow, and let nature do the recycling.

Just cut it and leave it to save time and money

You'll save 20-25% of your time because you won't have to stop and empty your lawnmower bag, and you'll avoid purchasing yard waste bags and hauling them to the curb. You'll need to fertilize less (25%-50%), since clippings return nutrients to the soil.

Mow your lawn correctly

To maintain your lawn properly, mow high and mow often, so that you only take off about 1/3 of the length of the grass. This will result in an attractive, neatly trimmed lawn, and clippings will disappear when they filter down to the soil. Most New Jersey lawns should be mowed 2½-3½" high (like the rough beside a golf course fairway), especially in summer, to shade the soil, cool the roots, and block weed growth. Mulching mowers help you do this; they chop the clippings into fine pieces that slip easily down to the soil. Most new mowers are mulching mowers, and you can attach

mulching equipment to your existing mower.

The right amount of water

Controlling watering rates will help your lawn grow at manageable levels and still stay healthy. Don't water until the lawn is dry. If it turns blue-green or gray, or if footprints don't spring back, it's time to water. Provide about an inch at a time for clay soil, and half an inch for sandy soil. Place a few cans around the lawn and note how long it takes for that much water to collect. Even in dry periods, lawns usually need a thorough watering only once a week, or twice if soils are sandy. If managed carefully, water will soak the soil four to six inches down, just right for building healthy root systems and greener growth. Early morning watering conserves water by preventing evaporation.

What to do with excessive growth

If you miss a week, or if heavy rain causes fast growth, you have some choices.

Double mow

Set the mower higher than usual and cut no more than the top third of the grass. In a day or two, set the mower height down and bring the lawn down another 1/3 of its height. Continue this process until you reach the desired height.

Mulch heavy clippings into the garden Bag or rake the clippings and apply them to your garden as mulch. Spread them an

inch deep, to cool the soil, retain water, prevent erosion and compaction, and smother weed seeds.

Mix them with the soil

New Jersey soils can be improved by adding organic matter. Added organic materials make heavy clay soils become more productive, and sandy soils retain more water.

Compost

Grass speeds up your composting, but can cause odors and deplete oxygen if not properly managed. If you compost large amounts of grass, turn the pile often with a pitchfork.

What about thatch?

Clippings don't cause thatch. Thatch is formed from the accumulation of dead roots and stems. The more you fertilize and water your lawn, the more it grows and the faster thatch accumulates.

Lawn additives

Many people apply too many lawn products, too often. It costs money and may harm the lawn. Better to evaluate problems and apply only what you need. Let your County Agriculture Extension Agents give you expert advice on care and disease treatment. You can find them in the blue pages of your phone book, and also get Extension lawn care publications on line at www.rce.rutgers.edu/.