

# Don't Trash Grass!

**Save Time and Money! Reduce Waste!**



Did you know that a ½ acre lawn in New England produces over 3 tons or nearly 260 bags of grass clippings each year? Think of all the time, money and effort it would take to bag all those clippings. Why go through all that hassle when it's really not necessary?

**You can have a healthy green lawn by leaving grass clippings where they fall!** It's simple...grass clippings left on the lawn will decompose and act as a natural organic fertilizer. This allows you to reduce the amount of additional commercial fertilizer you need to apply. Your lawn will still be healthy and green because each time you mow; you will be returning valuable nutrients to the soil!

**The key word is "less"...less fertilizer, less water, less work, and best of all, less waste!**

Recycling clippings back into the lawn requires less effort than disposing of them as waste. No one has to handle the clippings – not you, not your lawn care professional and not the waste management crew. You can reduce your mowing time by nearly 40% by not bagging, and spend less money on fertilizer and trash bags. And by not trashing grass, you'll be doing your part for the environment by reducing waste!

*If you follow these "Don't Trash Grass" mowing, fertilizing and watering guidelines, not only will you have a healthy lawn, but you'll never have to bag grass clippings again!*

## Mowing Techniques & Tips



- **Any mower can recycle grass clippings.** Simply remove the grass catcher! Ask your lawn mower dealer if a special safety plug or adaptor kit is needed to convert your mower into a "recycling" mower. You can also have a mulching blade installed.
- **Keep your grass mowed to 2"- 3" tall.**
- **Do not remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade in any single mowing.** For example, if your lawn is kept at 2" tall, it should not be allowed to grow higher than 3" before it is mowed again.
- **Mow when the grass is dry.**
- **Keep your mower blade sharp** because dull mowers tear the grass blade, injuring the plant, and create a brownish cast to the turf.
- **If the grass gets just a bit too high,** simply mow over the clippings a second time to further shred and scatter them.

- **If excessive growth occurs between mowing's**, raise the mower height, mow, and then gradually lower it over a span of several mowing's. This will help prevent shock to the plants.
- **When it's time to replace your mower**, consider buying a mulching, recycling, or a non-polluting reel mower. All of these do a good job of shredding and scattering grass clippings.

## What about Thatch?

Don't worry about grass clippings contributing to thatch problems. Turf experts nationwide agree that clippings do not produce thatch, because they are 80% water and decompose quickly. Rather, thatch is the accumulation of dead roots and stems and is most often caused by over fertilizing and over watering. A thatch layer of more than ½" should be removed as a matter of healthy lawn maintenance.

## Other Uses for Clippings

**Compost clippings at home:** Clippings are an excellent source of nitrogen for your home compost pile. No more than 1/3 of the pile should be fresh clippings. Mix thoroughly with "brown" materials such as leaves or straw and turn the pile regularly to keep it well oxygenated and to prevent odors.



**Use clippings as mulch:** Apply dried grass clippings directly on the soil about 1 inch thick to reduce weeds, moderate soil temperature, and control soil spattering, erosion, run-off and evaporation. Avoid mulching with clippings which have been recently treated with herbicides. This can harm your plants. As a precaution, mulch with clippings from herbicide treated lawns only after two lawn mowing's.

**Incorporate clippings into garden soil:** Mixing fresh grass clippings into the garden adds nutrients and organic matter which improves the texture and moisture retention properties of the soil. A two inch layer of grass can be turned into the soil to a depth of 6" about once a month.