

Grass Recycling

Solid Waste Management Fact Sheet No. 10

Many homeowners believe grass clippings need to be removed to have a healthy lawn. However, you can have a beautiful lawn without collecting grass clippings.

Grass Clipping Facts

- Grass clippings account for 75 percent of all yard waste.
- Up to 25 percent of your lawn's total fertilizer needs are supplied by clippings left on the lawn.
- Clippings contain 80 to 85 percent water and decompose quickly.
- Kansas State University research shows clippings do not contribute to thatch.
- Homeowners cut their average mowing time by 30 percent by not bagging clippings.
- Besides saving time, you also save money by not having to pay for bags or extra hauling.
- Not bagging your grass clippings helps save valuable landfill space.

If you do catch clippings, dump grass clippings in compost bin.

Grass Clipping Management in Three Easy Steps

To have a healthy lawn, you must fertilize, mow and water your lawn correctly.

1. Fertilize for a healthy lawn.

Fertilize your lawn to provide uniform growth throughout the season. A properly fertilized lawn will have a dense stand of turf that reduces weeds and recovers quickly from insect or disease injury.

Fertilize cool season grasses, such as Kentucky bluegrass, tall fescue, and perennial ryegrass at the following maintenance levels:

Low Maintenance: September

Good Maintenance: May*, September, November

Fertilize warm season grasses such as zoysia and bermuda when the grass is actively growing.

Average Maintenance: May*, July

*For slow and even growth, use a fertilizer containing a nitrogen source such as sulfur coated urea, urea formaldehyde or any other slow-release or slowly soluble nitrogen material.

2. Mow It Tall - Let It Fall.

Mow frequently so you remove no more than one-third of the total plant height. This may require one or more additional mowings a month.

RECOMMENDED MOWING HEIGHT (Inches)

	Spring	Summer	Fall
Bermuda/Zoysia	1-1½	1-1½	1-1½
Buffalograss	1½-2	1½-2	1½-2
Bluegrass/Ryegrass	2	3	2
Tall Fescue	2½	3½	2½

Mowing Tips.

Mow your lawn when it is dry so clippings can filter down to the soil without clumping.

If grass was unusually tall, you are left with a thick mass of clippings, rake the excess and compost or use the clippings as a mulch.

Mulching lawn mowers are recommended but are not required.

3. Water Wisely.

Taller mowing and proper fertilization result in a deep and efficient root system that reduces the need for extra water.

For lawns to remain green and actively growing during the driest part of the summer, about 1 inch to 1½ inches of water is needed per week from irrigation or rainfall.

Watering Tips.

The best time to water is early morning. Less water is lost by evaporation. Lawns watered too frequently tend to develop shallow root systems. Tightly compacted soils should be core aerified. Cores of soil about the size of an index finger are removed mechanically to loosen the soil and permit greater movement of water, fertilizer and air. Core aerifying increases decomposition of the grass clippings and enhances deep root growth.

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