

Healthy Lawn and Garden

Techniques to help improve the health of home lawns and gardens, save time and money, and reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions.



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Manage Yard Clippings at Home Through Backyard Composting and Grasscycling.

Yard clippings are defined as leaves, grass clippings, vegetable or other garden debris, shrubbery, or brush or tree trimmings, less than 4 feet in length and 2 inches in diameter. Many of these materials can be easily managed at home through backyard composting and grasscycling. These techniques can improve the health of home lawns and gardens, save time, money, and reduce harmful greenhouse Gas emissions.

Make the Most of Your Lawn and Your Time - Grasscycle!

Grasscycling, a simple natural approach to lawn care, is the practice of leaving grass clippings on the lawn or using them as mulch. Grass clippings are 75 to 85 percent water and decompose quickly. Through decomposition, grass clippings release nitrogen and other valuable nutrients resulting in a greener, healthier lawn without the use of fertilizer, pesticides and herbicides. Inappropriate application of fertilizer contributes to pollution of waterways which can impact the health of wildlife and aquatic species.

With grasscycling there is no raking or bagging of grass which means less time spent on lawn care. Consequently, eliminating the use of bags, reducing the frequency of stops and starts of the lawn mower to bag grass, and using grass clippings to add nutrients to the lawn instead of commercial fertilizer saves money. Less time using the mower will also save gas and reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

How To Grasscycle

Replace your conventional lawn mower blade with a mulching blade or use a mulching mower. Mulching mowers and blades are designed to allow the yard debris to be cut multiple times during the mowing process.

Mow grass to no more than 3 inches tall. For healthier grass, remove only one-third of the grass blade at a time, and no more than one-inch total. Leave the grass clippings where they fall and allow them to decompose.

Grasscycling Tips

- 1** Mow when lawn is dry
- 2** For wet lawns, raise the initial cutting height and gradually lower to proper height on follow-up passes
- 3** Use excess clippings as a mulch around plants or leave on the lawn
- 4** Direct clippings onto the lawn. Any clips that blow from under the mower onto sidewalks or driveways should be swept back onto the lawn to prevent them from ending up in surface water or drains. This adds nutrients to surface water and increases the growth of algae and other aquatic plants that can deplete oxygen in surface waters.

DID YOU KNOW?

When yard clippings decompose in landfills they create methane gas. The US EPA has identified landfills as the single largest source of methane (CH₄), a potent greenhouse gas that is 23 times more efficient at trapping heat than carbon dioxide (CO₂).

Landfills contribute approximately 34% of all man-made methane released to the atmosphere in the United States (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2007).

AMAZING FACT

During the spring and summer months grass clippings account for up to 50 percent of one's total yard trimmings.

MYTHBUSTER

Leaving grass clippings on your lawn does not cause thatch.

Resource Recovery and Recycling Authority of Southwest Oakland County

contact us at 20000 W. Eight Mile Rd. Southfield, MI 48075 online at www.RRRASOC.org or call 248.208.2270