

Grasscycling

Mow high, mow often, and leave the clippings for a healthy lawn

Grasscycling, or mulch-mowing is the natural recycling of grass by leaving the clipping on the lawn when mowing. Clippings will break down quickly, feeding valuable nutrients to the soil. Grasscycling saves time and money and protects the environment.

Benefits of Grasscycling

- Reduces work since the bagging and disposal of clippings is eliminated.
- Contributes at least ¼ of your lawns fertilizer needs, reducing fertilizer costs and water pollution.
- Improves soil and lawn health and resistance to disease.
- Benefits the environment by returning beneficial organic matter to the soil.

Research has shown that lawns can generate approximately 300 pounds of clippings per 1000 square feet each year. Grass clippings are too valuable to throw away, and grasscycling allows this green material to be reused in our urban landscapes.

Grasscycling Tips

- **Mow when the grass is dry**, to avoid clumping.
- **Mow high.** Set mowing heights up to 2 to 2 ½ inches for most lawns to hide clippings better, and to make a healthier lawn.
- **Mow often.** Follow the "1/3 Rule:" mow your lawn often enough so that no more than 1/3 of the length of the grass blade is cut in any one mowing. Frequent mowing will produce short clippings that will not cover up the grass surface.
- **Mow weekly in the spring.** Cutting too much at once stresses the grass.
- **Leave the clippings on the lawn.** Grasscycling provides free fertilizer, helps lawns grow greener and denser, and doesn't cause thatch buildup.
- **Water and fertilize less.** Every time you grasscycle, you add free fertilizer to your lawn.
- **Sharpen mower blades twice a year.** Dull blades can shred grass.

You can grasscycle with most any mower. The mower collection bag should be removed to allow clippings to drop on the lawn. If it's a rear-discharge bagging mower, remove the bag and cover the discharge chute. (Most rear-baggers have a cover that drops down when the bag is removed, to protect you from flying rocks.) If you have a side-discharge mower, with a deflector that sprays clippings out as you mow, simply mow in a pattern that spreads clippings uniformly on the lawn.



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Thanks to Seattle Public Utilities for sharing grasscycling tips!