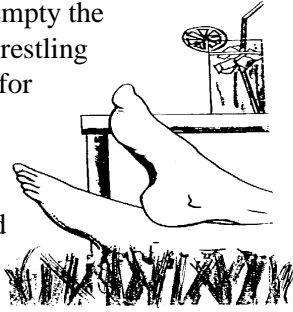


WHY do you bag your grass clippings?

After all, lawn mowing is W-O-R-K! And bagging your grass clippings is probably the most time-consuming part of lawn mowing. Sure, your lawn looks great afterwards. But, the larger your lawn, the more grass clippings; the more grass clippings, the more trash bags; the more trash bags, the more **EXHAUSTING** the lawn mowing becomes!

Now, consider for a moment NOT bagging your grass clippings. Gone is the hassle of stopping every 10 minutes to empty the mower bag, raking, wrestling with trash bags, and, for many of us, having to pay extra to have the grass clippings hauled away. Instead of causing you trouble, your grass clippings remain on the lawn, decomposing and working their way back into your soil.



Grass clippings are at least 85% water, and when left on the lawn, they begin to decompose immediately. The grass clippings turn into something called *Humus* which, among other things, allows the soil to hold more moisture. If the soil holds more water, you'll use less of it, and that's good for your lawn too.

Healthy lawns need regular irrigation, but many lawns are improperly watered. In our area, it is best to water only four days per week, and to soak the lawn. Infrequent but deep watering produces a healthy root system that is more drought-resistant. The best time to water your lawn is early in the morning.

Grass clippings left on the lawn provide a good source of slow-release, high in nitrogen, fertilizer. Every 33-gallon trash bag contains one-quarter pound of organic nitrogen. Thus, bagging your grass clippings and tossing it out actually robs your lawn of a free, natural fertilizer.

Won't grass clippings cause thatch?

There is a common, yet incorrect, belief that Grasscycling causes thatch. *Thatch* is the **woody** portion of the grass plant - the roots, rhizomes and dead lower leaf sheaths at the ground level. Thatch occurs as a result of improper turf maintenance, and not from Grasscycling.

The best way to prevent thatch is by properly watering, mowing, aerating and weeding on a regular schedule. Prevent the buildup of tightly-packed layers of organic debris, and you will prevent thatch.

GRASSCYCLING

saves time spent bagging, and can reduce annual fertilizer needs

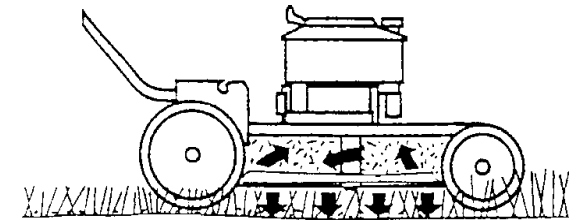
- * Remove excess thatch (over 1/2 inch), then leave clippings on the lawn.
- * Keep your mower blade sharp.
- * Mow frequently when the grass is dry and at the recommended cutting level for your type of turf.
- * Never cut more than 1/2 of the grass length.
- * Avoid over-fertilizing or over-watering your lawn.

Mowing Tips

Proper mowing is essential for Grasscycling

Here are some simple mowing tips that will assure successful grasscycling:

1. Rake heavy leaf cover from your lawn before mowing.
2. Cut grass when it is dry, on a day when the lawn was not watered.



3. Avoid over-fertilizing your lawn. A fall application of a time-released, granulated fertilizer is most effective. For mid-summer demands of needed nutrients, apply a low-nitrogen, liquid fertilizer.
4. Cut your grass regularly (every 5 to 7 days is common for our area).
5. Don't let your lawn become a hay field before mowing. Your grass clippings should be not more than 1" in order to fall through the grass and onto the soil.
6. Use a sharp mower blade. Your work will go much faster by cleanly cutting the grass rather than tearing each grass blade. Also, torn grass is more susceptible to turf diseases.

What should I do when I go on vacation?

First, see if you can get someone to mow your lawn while you are gone so that your mowing schedule can be maintained. If not, mow your lawn when you get back, but do not try to grasscycle your grass clippings. When your lawn gets much longer than four inches, the grass tends to mat and clump when you cut it. You may want to collect your vacation grass clippings and use them as mulch around shrubs.

Note: Allow at least two weeks following a herbicide application before using treated grass clippings as a mulch.

A word (or two) about mower options

You do not have to buy a new mulching mower in order to grasscycle your grass clippings. Manual push mowers can be operated without a grass catcher. Most rear-bagging and side-bagging mowers can be converted to mulching mowers with a trap door over the discharge chute. **Consult your owner's manual or local equipment dealer before operating your lawn mower without a bag.** Be sure you are safely protected from the possibility of flying sticks and stones.

Mulching adapter kits or universal mulching blades are available for many types of power mowers. Contact your local equipment dealer for more specific information as to whether your current mower can be adapted to a mulching mower.

If you are planning to purchase a new power mower, dedicated mulching or multi-purpose mowers are a good investment. Dedicated mulching mowers are designed to cut and re-cut the grass clippings until they are fine enough to sift deep into the turf. Multi-purpose mowers allow for both mulching and optional bagging for grass or leaf collection.

According to turf experts, Grasscycling:

- * Reduces water evaporation from the lawn surface.
- * Reduces lawn wear by creating a cushioning layer of humus.
- * Facilitates better turf growth by keeping the soil temperature cooler.

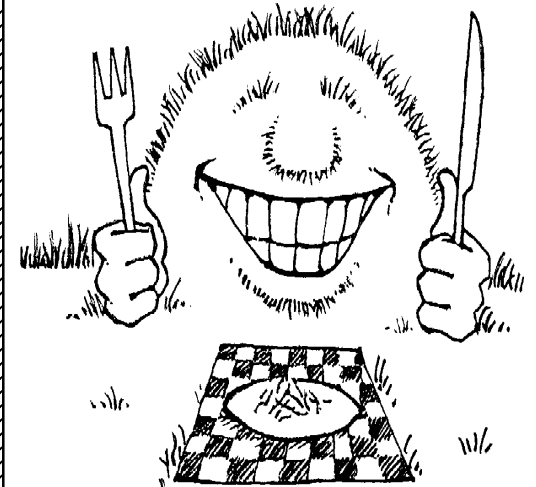
For more information regarding Grasscycling, or other disposal options for grass and other types of yard waste, contact

**Countywide Solid Waste Programs
(509) 886-0899**



This recycled paper is recyclable

GRASS-CYCLING



within

DOUGLAS COUNTY

What is GRASSCYCLING?

Grasscycling is the natural process of recycling grass clippings simply by leaving them on the lawn after mowing. Grass clippings left on the lawn quickly decompose and release nutrients back into the turf. Aside from reducing what you throw away, grasscycling will save you time, effort and MONEY!