

Art by Joey Williams (Grade 7-9)



How do you dispose of grass clippings after mowing the lawn?

- *Put them in the garbage?*
- *Put them on the curb for collection?*
- *Compost them?*

Why not
LEAVE IT ON THE LAWN?

That will:

- *Benefit the environment*
- *Improve your lawn*
- *Save time*
- *Save landfill space*

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- One-quarter acre of lawn produces more than 1½ tons of clippings during the growing season!
- Time spent on lawn care decreases with the elimination of bagging, even when mowing increases to once every four to seven days!

For more information on “Leave It On The Lawn” or backyard composting, call:

The Composting Hotline at 518-402-8705,
or write to:
NYSDEC
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-7253,
or e-mail us at:
recycling@dec.ny.gov
and check out our webpage at:
www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/294.html
or call your local Cornell Cooperative
Extension office

Let's
LEAVE IT ON THE LAWN
NEW YORK



Art by Taylor DiCuzzo (Grade 4-6)



**Department of
Environmental
Conservation**



Why You Should **LEAVE IT ON THE LAWN**

- Reduces the amount and frequency of fertilizer application and costs
- Returns nutrients to the soil
- Saves time because the grass is no longer bagged
- Reduces the amount of garbage by about 10%

HOW TO **LEAVE IT ON THE LAWN**

Allow your grass to grow to three inches, and then cut no more than one inch off the top. This is the “one-third” rule. It helps develop a deeper root system, which is a natural defense against weeds, disease and drought.

Common Questions

1. Do grass clippings cause thatch?

No. Thatch is an accumulation of the “woody” parts of the grass plant, not the clippings and is most often caused by too much watering and fertilizing.

2. Isn't it more work to mow the lawn often enough to keep clippings short?

No. Cutting grass before it is overgrown is easier and faster, and leaving clippings on the lawn further reduces workload.

3. What if my lawn grows too high between mowings to leave the clippings?

You have several options. You can mow the clippings to further shred and scatter them. You can raise the mower's height so only the top-third of the grass blade is removed, and then gradually lower the mower height for the next several mowings.

4. Do I need a mulching mower?

No. Mulching blades and adaptor kits are available for many types of lawn mowers. When it is time to replace your mower, consider purchasing an electric mulching mower.

OTHER USEFUL LAWN INFORMATION

- Watering your lawn is best done in the early morning. An inch of water per week is sufficient for good root growth.
- Fertilizing varies with soil types and growing conditions. The rule of thumb is two to four pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn per year.
- Test the soil to determine your fertilizer needs, and remember to adjust the pH of the soil to between 6.5 and 7.2. This will improve the efficiency of the nutrients.

Studies have shown that grass recycling reduces the need for fertilizer by 25%.

Do You Compost Yard Debris?

If you don't want to leave grass clippings on your lawn, try backyard composting, which is simple and beneficial. Methods of backyard composting range from creating a simple pile of compost to purchasing a composting bin.

For some **great tips** on caring for your lawn naturally, check DEC's webpage on Green Lawns and Gardens at:
www.dec.ny.gov/public/44290.html

Art by Min Xu Wu Grade 10-12)

