

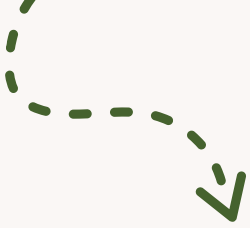
# Environmentally Friendly Lawn Care



## **GRASS - CUT IT & LEAVE IT**

**LEAVE THE GRASS CLIPPINGS ON YOUR LAWN WHEN YOU MOW, AND LET NATURE DO THE RECYCLING.**

**WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP GREEN TEAM, MORRIS COUNTY**



**GRASS CLIPPINGS ARE A MAJOR PART OF NEW JERSEY'S MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE STREAM. AS A NEW JERSEY RESIDENT, YOU ARE ALREADY HELPING TO AVOID AIR POLLUTION AND WASTED RESOURCES BY RECYCLING. YOU CAN DO MORE BY REDUCING WASTE AT THE SOURCE. LEAVE THE GRASS CLIPPINGS ON YOUR LAWN WHEN YOU MOW, AND LET NATURE DO THE RECYCLING.**

# Here's How

**save**



## **Just cut it and leave it to save time and money**

Save 20-25% of your time by not having to stop and empty your lawnmower bag, and you'll avoid purchasing yard waste bags and hauling them to the curb. You'll need to fertilize less (25-50%), since clippings return nutrients to the soil.

**mow**



## **Mow your lawn correctly**

Mow high and mow often, so that you only take off about 1/3 of the length of the grass. This will result in an attractive, neatly trimmed lawn, and clippings will disappear when they filter down to the soil.

**water**



## **The right amount of water**

If managed carefully, water will soak the soil four to six inches down, just right for building healthy root systems and greener growth. Early morning watering conserves water by preventing evaporation.

WHAT TO DO WITH EXCESSIVE GROWTH.  
IF YOU MISS A WEEK, OR IF HEAVY RAIN CAUSES FAST  
GROWTH, YOU HAVE SOME CHOICES.

double mow



### Double mow

Set the mower higher than usual and cut no more than the top third of the grass. In a day or two, set the mower height down and bring the lawn mower down another 1/3 of its height. Continue this process until you reach the desired height.

mulch



### Mulch heavy clippings into the garden

Bag or rake the clippings and apply them to your garden as mulch. Spread them an inch deep, to cool the soil, retain water,

mix in



### Mix them with soil

New Jersey soils can be improved by adding organic matter. Added organic materials make heavy clay soils become more productive, and sandy soils retain more water

compost



### Compost

Grass speeds up your composting, but can cause odors and deplete oxygen if not properly managed. If you compost large amounts of grass, turn the pile often with a pitchfork.

## WHAT ABOUT THATCH?

CLIPPINGS DON'T CAUSE THATCH. THATCH IS FORMED FROM THE ACCUMULATION OF DEAD ROOTS AND STEMS. THE MORE YOU FERTILIZE AND WATER YOUR LAWN, THE MORE IT GROWS AND THE FASTER THATCH ACCUMULATES.



## ABOUT LAWN ADDITIVES

PEOPLE OFTEN APPLY TOO MANY LAWN PRODUCTS, TOO FREQUENTLY. IT COSTS MONEY AND MAY HARM THE LAWN AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

EVERY YEAR IN NEW JERSEY, DOZENS OF PEOPLE POISON THEMSELVES TAKING CARE OF THEIR OWN LAWNS BECAUSE THEY DON'T TAKE PRODUCT LABEL WARNINGS SERIOUSLY, AND THEY THINK THAT MORE IS BETTER. LAWN ADDITIVES ARE POWERFUL CHEMICALS, AND YOU NEED TO USE THEM CORRECTLY.

# Best Practices

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soil test



### Evaluate problems and apply only what you need.

Let your County Agriculture Extension Agents give you expert advice on care and disease treatment. You can find lawn care publication at [www.rce.rutgers.edu/](http://www.rce.rutgers.edu/). Additionally, for a minimal cost, you can follow a simple process to have your soil tested and analyzed. This test will result in a report emailed directly to you specifying exactly what measures you can take to improve the quality of your soil resulting in a more healthy lawn. See <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/soil-testing-lab/how-to.php>, for instructions on how to have your soil tested.

**Don't guess, soil test!**

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ABOUT FERTILIZERS, HERBICIDES AND INSECTICIDES TOO MUCH FERTILIZER MEANS RAPID GROWTH, MORE MOWING AND CAN BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE ENVIRONMENT. USE SOIL TESTING TO VERIFY THE NEED FOR FERTILIZER..

HERBICIDES REMAIN ON THE GRASS FOR SOME TIME, AND MAKE THE CLIPPINGS UNSUITABLE FOR MULCH, SO IT'S IMPORTANT TO CUT IT AND LEAVE IT WHEN YOU USE WEED KILLERS. TOO MUCH HERBICIDE CAN BURN THE LAWN, KILL NEARBY PLANTS, AND CONTAMINATE WATERWAYS. INSTEAD OF REPEATED WHOLE-LAWN APPLICATION OF WEED KILLERS, TRY A ONE-TIME PRE-EMERGENT WEED KILLER AND SPOT APPLICATION IF YOUR LAWN HAS ONLY A FEW WEEDS.

IF YOU SEE SIGNS OF INSECT DAMAGE, CALL YOUR EXTENSION AGENT TO DETERMINE WHAT YOU NEED BEFORE YOU SELECT AN INSECTICIDE. YOU MAY FIND THAT YOU DON'T NEED ANY AT ALL.