



GRASS CLIPPINGS DO'S

- **Leave them on your lawn** - This practice provides many benefits
- **Other uses for clippings** - Compost with other yard waste, use as mulch, or incorporate into garden soil

GRASS CLIPPING DON'TS

- **Don't trash them** - They add cost to collection and are too valuable to throw away
- **Don't blow them into street, leave them on other paved areas or near any water bodies, or dump in neighborhood common areas** - Grass clippings are stormwater pollutants. The nitrogen and phosphorus they contain will reach storm sewer system and then a river or lake, causing algal bloom. All the practices above are illegal.



Never place grass clippings in your solid waste or recycling container!

BENEFITS OF LEAVING GRASS CLIPPINGS ON THE LAWN

- **Reduce Watering** - Grass clippings contain 80 to 85% water and decompose quickly when left on the lawn, assisting in keeping moisture in the soil longer.
- **Reduce Fertilizing** - Grass clippings contain about 4% nitrogen (N), 0.5% phosphorus (P), 2% potassium (K), plus small amount of other plant nutrients. If left on the lawn, grass clippings can supply 25% of a lawn's total fertilizer.
- **Reduce Air Emissions** - Reducing the tonnage of grass clippings hauled to other places will reduce exhaust emission from hauling vehicles.
- **Cost Savings** - Less money spent of fertilizers and watering.
- **Time Saving** - Not needing to stop and bag the clippings, you can cut your mowing time by 30% when you leave them on the lawn.

WHY GRASS CLIPPINGS SHOULD NOT BE TRASHED

- In the United States, if bagged, grass clippings account for around 20% of a household's annual output of solid waste.
- In the collection system, grass clippings are costly nuisance. The clippings add significantly to the Borough's waste stream and add expense for all residents.
- When taken to landfills, as grass clippings decompose the nutrients they contain are not only wasted, but they also contribute to landfill leachate and groundwater contamination. Grass clipping are too valuable to throw away. They contain plant nutrients and organic matter for your soil.

DO'S AND DON'T OF

GRASS CLIPPINGS

DON'T TRASH IT!

SANITATION DEPARTMENT

www.quakertown.org/SolidWaste

267-347-5009

Utilitybilling@quakertown.org

MOWING TIP & TECHNIQUES

- **Any mower can recycle grass clippings.** Simply remove the grass catcher! Ask your lawn mower dealer if a special safety plug or adapter kit is needed to convert your mower into a “recycling” mower. You can also have a mulching blade installed.
- **Keep your grass mowed to 2” - 3” tall.**
- **Do not remove more than 1/3 of the grass blade in any single mowing.** For example, if your lawn is kept at 2” tall, it should not be allowed to grow higher than 3” before it is mowed again.
- **Mow when the grass is dry.**
- **Keep your mower blade sharp** because dull mowers tear the grass blade, injuring the plant, and create a brownish cast to the turf.
- **If the grass gets just a bit too high,** simply mow over the clippings a second time to further shred and scatter them.
- **If excessive growth occurs between mowings,** raise the mower height, mow and then gradually lower it over a span of several mowings. This will help prevent shock to the plants.
- **When it’s time to replace your mower,** consider buying a mulching, recycling, or a nonpolluting reel mower. All of these do a good job of shredding and scattering grass clippings.



FERTILIER APPLICATION

Proper fertilizer application is important. And remember, when it comes to fertilizer, more is not better! Research shows that most grasses require only modest levels of nitrogen for good color and controlled growth. Too much fertilizer will make your lawn grow faster, resulting in more mowing and more clippings!

Apply fertilizer to your lawn in late April and again in September. If a third treatment is needed, apply in late May. Apply only 1/2 pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet of lawn at each application. To figure this out, simply divide 100 by twice the percentage of nitrogen (N) in the fertilizer. This will give you the application rate in pounds of fertilizer per 1000 square feet of lawn.

For slower, more uniform growth, choose fertilizers containing sources of self-release nitrogen such as methylene urea, ureaformaldehyde, sulfur coated urea, or IBDU. The bag may also read “water insoluble nitrogen” or “slow release nitrogen”. All are acceptable and will increase the amount of time the grass can use the nutrient.

WHAT ABOUT THATCH?

Thatch is a layer of undecomposed organic matter that builds up between the soil surface & the actively growing green vegetation. A thatch layer will develop if organic matter is produced faster than it is decomposed.

Contrary to popular belief, leaving clippings on the lawn does not contribute to increased thatch.

Clippings are composed of water & easily-degradable compounds that break down rapidly & do not accumulate. Long clippings may contain wiry stem material that is slower to decompose, but are still not significant contributors to thatch buildup.

WATERING PRACTICES

- **Conserve resources by not watering unless the grass really needs it.** Let Mother Nature water your lawn!
- **If you choose to water, 1” of water is adequate to wet the soil to a depth of 4”-6”.** Place an empty can under the sprinkler to measure when an inch has been applied. If water begins to run off the lawn before an inch is applied, turn off the water and let it soak in for an hour or so, then resume watering until 1” is applied.
- **Water deeply and less frequently to encourage deep root growth.** Light, frequent watering encourages shallow roots and may lead to increased disease and stress injury.
- **The best time to water is in the morning** because less water is lost through evaporation and transpiration.
- **Avoid watering during mid-day and try not to water in the evenings** since a lawn that remains damp during the night is more prone to disease.

