



Grasscycling

Grasscycling is the natural recycling of grass clippings, by leaving them on the lawn when mowing instead of raking them up for composting or disposal. With grass clippings making up nearly half of all yard waste it's not surprising that waste management authorities are promoting grasscycling as a positive move to save the environment.

By grasscycling, not only will you save time and money, but you will have a greener, more healthy lawn. Believe it or not, leaving the clippings on your lawn leads to a deeper, more efficient root system and increases your lawn's resistance to disease, drought and insects.

How do you grasscycle? Actually many of us have been doing it all along without being aware of it. The term grasscycling was coined by PLANET (Professional Landcare Network), and quite simply -- you mow your lawn and walk away. Do not rake up the clippings or collect them in a bag, leave them on the lawn to break down naturally and return nutrients and organic matter back to the soil.

Realize that now you are leaving the grass clippings on the lawn you should mow often enough so you are never removing more than one third of the length of the grass at any one time.

If you go on vacation and your grass gets out of hand, it is best to raise your mower to the highest height and cut the grass, then lower it back to its original height and mow your lawn again in two or three days. This may sound like a bit much, but keep in mind that when grass growth slows in the hot, dry days of summer you will be able to space your mowings much farther apart!

Mow in different directions each time you mow the lawn — side to side one week, on the diagonal the next. By changing the direction in which you mow you can eliminate unevenness or skipped spots and avoid creating wheel ruts in your lawn.

Keep your lawn mower blade sharp. Mowing with a dull blade tears the grass and the damage causes the ends of the grass to brown.

Grazing the side of a tree trunk or shrub stem with a lawnmower can kill trees and shrubs. It's a good idea to strip the grass from around the tree trunk in a circle two to six feet in diameter, depending on the size of the tree. Cover this circle with landscape fabric to control weeds. To prevent grass from growing into the circle, add an edging that does not protrude more than an inch above the finished ground level. You could choose black plastic edging, wood, or bricks laid flat. Cover the fabric with two to four inches of mulch. Soft mulches like shredded bark, compost, shredded leaves or cocoa hulls are preferred as stones can damage the lawn mower blade, or get thrown from the mower at a high speed.