

## FAQ's About Grasscycling

### ***Will grasscycling make my lawn look bad?***

No! Follow the 1/3 rule – mow often enough so that no more than 1/3 of the length of the grass is cut. The short clippings decompose quickly and will not cover the grass surface.

### ***Does grasscycling cause thatch buildup?***

No! Grasscycling does not contribute to thatch problems. Research has shown that grass roots and stems are the primary cause of thatch, not grass clippings. Remember, the more you water and fertilize your lawn - - the faster it grows, and the faster thatch accumulates.

### ***Does grasscycling spread lawn disease?***

No! Improper watering and fertilizing are the primary causes of turfgrass disease. If a favorable environment for disease is present, it will occur whether grass clippings are left on the lawn or not.

### ***Does grasscycling require special equipment?***

To grasscycle, a special mower is not needed. Regular lawn mowers can be used to grasscycle effectively by removing the collection bag and adding a blade adapter, which will cut up and pulverize grass even more finely. Also, check with your local lawn mower dealer about mulching mowers. Models are available that finely cut up grass clippings and return them to the lawn. Electric mulching mowers can also help reduce air pollution.

### ***Are there alternatives to grasscycling?***

Yes! Grasscycling does not work in every situation. Pre-longed we weather, mower breakdowns, or infrequent mowing are situations where grass clippings should probably be bagged since a larger number of clippings may be generated. But don't throw the clippings away! Add clippings to your compost pile, or use them as mulch around trees, flowerbeds and shrubs.



Township of Cedar Grove  
Department of Public Works

## Township of Cedar Grove Department of Public Works

### DEPARTMENTAL PHONE NUMBERS, OFFICE HOURS & LOCATIONS

#### Engineering Department

340 Little Falls Rd.  
Mon-Fri 8:00am-4:00pm  
Phone: (973) 239-1410 ext. 280

#### Water, Sewer & Road Department

340 Little Falls Rd.  
Mon-Fri 8:00am-4:00pm  
Phone: (973) 239-1410  
Ext. 283(water), 282(sewer) & 281(roads)



Grasscycling Guide

## What is Grasscycling?

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Grasscycling is the natural recycling of grass by leaving clippings on the lawn when mowing. Grass clippings decompose quickly, returning valuable nutrients back into the soil.

Grass clippings are a major part of the New Jersey's municipal solid waste stream. As a Cedar Grove 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 their recycling.

### Just Cut It and Leave It to Save Time and Money

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You'll save 20-25% of your time because you won't have to stop and empty your lawnmower bag. Also, you will avoid purchasing yard waste bags and hauling them to the curb. You'll need to fertilize less (20-50%), since clippings return nutrients to soil.

### Grasscycling Begins with Proper Mowing

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To maintain your lawn properly, mow high and often, so that you only take off 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. Most Cedar Grove lawn should not be mowed 2 ½ - 3 ½" high, especially in the summer, to shade the soil, cool the roots and block weed growth.

Mulching mowers help you do this; they chip the clippings into fine pieces that slip easily down to the soil. Most new mowers are mulching mowers and you can attach mulching equipment to your existing mower.

## The Right Amount of Water

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Controlling watering rates will help your lawn grow at manageable levels and still stay healthy. Don't water until the lawn is dry. If it turns blue-green, gray or footprints don't spring back, it's time to water. Provide about an inch at a time for clay soil and ½ an inch for sandy soil. Place a few cans around the lawn and note how long it takes for that much water to collect.

Even in dry periods, lawns usually need a thorough watering once or twice a week. If managed carefully, water will soak the soil 4-6" down, which is just right for building healthy root systems and greener growth. Early morning watering conserves water by preventing evaporation.

### What to do with Excessive Growth

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If you miss a week, or if heavy rain causes fast growth, you have some choices;

#### ***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 down another 1/3 of its height. Continue this process until you reach the desired height.

#### ***Mulch heavy clippings in the garden***

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

#### ***Mix them with the 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

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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.

### Grasscycling + Proper Fertilizing + Proper Watering = Healthy Lawn

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Grasscycling with proper fertilizing and watering are the ingredients for a healthy lawn. Remember that grasscycling provides half of the nitrogen needed by a lawn, so you will not need as much fertilizer. Over fertilizing weakens your lawn and causes excess growth.

Sunny lawns only require three applications of fertilizer per year; in May, September and November. For shaded lawns, two applications of fertilizer will be enough. Remember, fertilizing in the fall or winter is the best for your lawn.

When watering your lawn, water effectively, not often. Over watering will cause your lawn to grow faster, so control your watering times. Water your lawn during the early morning or evening when less evaporation occurs. Always wet soil to a depth of four to six inches down. This is perfect for building healthy roots and green growth.

**For additional information on the Township of Cedar Grove's Recycling Program, please contact the Department of Public Works at (973) 239-1410 x280**

**Visit the Township of Cedar Grove's Website at [www.cedargrovenj.org](http://www.cedargrovenj.org)**

This pamphlet has been adapted from materials produced by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection and the Ocean County Department of Solid Waste management.