

## What is Grasscycling?

Grasscycling is leaving the grass clippings on the lawn after mowing, allowing them to work their way back into the soil. Grasscycling provides a number of benefits including more leisure time and less garbage going to our landfills. It's easy to do and works wonders for your lawn!

## Why Grasscycle?

It's easy! No more need to bag grass clippings. Grasscycled grass clippings disappear into your lawn and leave it healthy and green.

### Save time!

You can reduce the amount of time you spend on your lawn by more than 35%. No more fuss and muss bagging clippings means more time to spend on the golf course, at the beach or just enjoying the sunny Okanagan!

### Save money!

- Buy less fertilizer! Grass clippings left on the lawn can make up 25% of your lawn's fertilizer requirements.
- Buy fewer garbage bags! No

# Grasscycling

need to bag clippings.

- Buy fewer extra garbage tags! Less grass clippings means fewer garbage tags are needed and fewer trips to the landfill. Currently, only two bags or containers per week are accepted by City and Regional District garbage haulers without buying extra tags.
- Any mower can be used to grasscycle. No special equipment required!

### Have a Healthier Lawn!

- Grass clippings are made up of the same nutrients found in lawn fertilizers: nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Clippings left on the lawn act as a slow release fertilizer, returning these nutrients back to your lawn as they decompose.
- Grass clippings also help to shade and protect the roots of your lawn.
- Grass clippings reduce water loss through evaporation, an important consideration in the Okanagan!

## How do I Grasscycle?

A few simple changes can start you Grasscycling:

### Let it Grow!

- Keep your lawn a little longer, at least 6 cm, or about 2½ to 3 inches. A longer grass blade provides more protection from heat and water loss and makes for a healthier root system.
- Mow as needed to keep lawn height at 6 cm or about 2½ to 3 inches. This may involve mowing the lawn more often in peak growing seasons, and less often towards late sum-

mer and fall.

- When you mow, take off the top ⅓ or ¼ of the blade, no more than one inch, to keep your lawn at 6 cm, or 2½ to 3 inches.

### Let it Lie!

- Mow late in the day and give the grass clippings a chance to settle overnight. On average, the grass clippings should be gone in two to three days. This may vary depending on moisture content. Drier clippings will decompose more slowly than moist clippings.
- Mowing in different directions each time will avoid ruts developing in your lawn.

### Mow it Dry!

- Mow when grass is dry. If grass is wet it may clump. If this happens, simply mow over it again, or collect the excess for your composter. Dried grass clippings can be used as a protective cover for garden and shrubs, to reduce water loss and control weed growth.

### Keep it Sharp!

- Keep your blade sharp for best results.
- Some mowers can have a mulching blade installed to chop grass clippings up even finer each time you mow. The smaller the clipping, the faster it will break down and disappear. Check with your local dealer. And if you're in the market for a new mower, consider the benefits of a mulching mower.

### No Thatch!

- Thatch is a buildup of grass roots and stems at the base of your lawn that can hinder lawn

growth. Grasscycling does not contribute to thatch, which is actually caused by over watering and over fertilizing. Clippings from grasscycling are made up mostly of water (85%) and break down quickly.

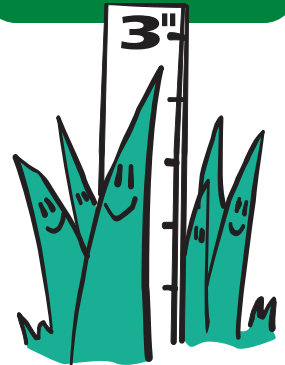
- Core aeration in the spring and fall will prevent thatch buildup, allowing moisture and nutrients to penetrate the roots. Care is needed when it comes to de-thatching your lawn — check with your local lawn professional.

### Compost!

- If clippings are too long, or wet, you may want to collect them for composting. Grass clippings are an excellent source of nitrogen for your composter. Remember not to compost your lawn clippings if weed killer has been applied. These harmful chemicals don't break down in the composting process.

## Grasscycling in Action

For more information on composting, visit the Composting Education Garden at Mission Creek Regional Park on Springfield Road or contact the Waste Reduction Office at 469-6250. See for yourself how easy Grasscycling can be and how great your lawn can look.



# 12-Step Program to Grow Great Grass!

1. **AERATE** in spring or fall to reduce soil compaction and allow air, water and nutrients to reach roots.
2. **TOPDRESS** with fine organic compost to improve water retention and soil condition.
3. **OVERSEED** heavily with a rye/fescue mix; bare patches invite weed invasions.
4. **DETHATCH** in fall to allow water, air and nutrients to reach roots and discourage insects and disease.
5. **MOW HIGH** to 6-8 cm to retain moisture, provide shade, and develop deep roots.
6. **GRASSCYCLE** your lawn clippings to provide 25% of your lawn's nutrient needs.
7. **SHARPEN UP** your mower blades; grass recovers faster from a clean cut than from many tears.
8. **WATER DEEPLY** but infrequently, striving for 2.5 cm of water per week; overwatering leads to disease and insects.
9. **SKIP THE WEED AND FEED** — blanket fertilizers and herbicides can harm beneficial insects, soil and lawn health and do not address the root of your weed problem. Try pesticide alternatives such as hand-digging or biological controls.
10. **LIMIT YOUR LAWN** and plant drought tolerant ground covers and native plants. Increase diversity in your landscape and create a more balanced ecosystem.
11. **TOLERATE THE ODD “PEST”** and accept clover, dandelions and ants as part of the landscape; these and many “pests” are actually beneficial.
12. **CORRECTLY IDENTIFY** the insect, disease or weed and determine if they are a problem and why they are thriving. Use pesticide alternatives.



Green Lawns  Healthy Families:  
**Be Pesticide Free**



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