

## FAQs About Grasscycling

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

No! Follow the 1/3 rule. Mow often enough so that not 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 fertilize and water your lawn – the faster it grows, and the faster the thatch accumulates.

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

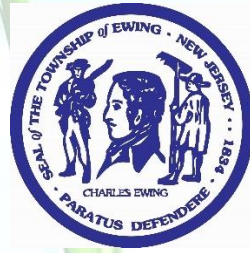
No! Improper water and fertilizing are the primary causes of turfgrass disease. If a favorable environment for disease is present, it will occur, whether grass clippings are left on the lawn or not.

### ***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 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! Grass cycling does not work in every situation. Prolonged wet weather, mower breakdowns, or infrequent mowing are situations where grass clippings should probably be bagged since a large 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, flower beds, and shrubs.



**Bert H. Steinmann, Mayor**  
**Township of Ewing**  
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**Ewing, NJ 08628**

**REDUCE**  
**REUSE**  
**RECYCLE**



## A Guide to Grasscycling

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Cut It and Leave It



## What is Grasscycling

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 New Jersey's municipal solid waste stream. As a Ewing 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.

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

You'll save 20% - 25% of your time because you won't have 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.

## Grasscycling Begins with Proper Mowing

To maintain your lawn properly, mow high and mow 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 Ewing lawns should be mowed 2.5-2.5" high (like the rough besides a golf course fairway), especially in the summer, to shade the soil, cool the roots, and block weed growth. Mulching mowers help you do this; they clip 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 H<sub>2</sub>O

Controlling watering rates will help your lawn grow at manageable levels and stay healthy. Don't wait until the lawn is dry. If it turns blue-green or gray, or if footprints don't spring back, it's time to water. Provide about an inch at a time for clay soil, and half 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 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 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 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, prevent erosion and compactions, and smother weed seeds.

### Mix Them into 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

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

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 and or winter is best for your lawn.

When water your lawn, water effectively – not often. Over watering will cause your lawn to grow faster, so control your watering times. Water 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 Ewing Township's Recycling Program**

**Please call 609-882-3382**

**Or visit the website at  
[www.ewingnj.org](http://www.ewingnj.org)**