



Grasscycling and Mulching

The Cutting Edge in Waste Reduction

Member communities: *Farmington, Farmington Hills, Novi, Southfield, South Lyon, Walled Lake, and Wixom.*

What is Grasscycling?

Grasscycling is the easiest way to reduce your waste. Grasscycling simply means letting the grass clips stay on the lawn when you mow. Grass is primarily made up of two components: water and nitrogen. So, why do we cut grass, bag it and have it hauled away, only to then pay for more water and nitrogen-based fertilizer? When you let your clips fall back onto the lawn, you save time, energy and money.

Contrary to what many people believe, grass clipping do not cause thatch. Thatch is usually caused by excessive watering and over fertilizing.

If you mow very high grass and have a lot of clips left on the ground, sometimes it is necessary to rake them up. This is a perfect opportunity to put that compost bin to use!



Tips for Grasscycling

- Start with a sharp blade. You should have the mower blade sharpened once or twice a year. Dull blades will tear grass and make the lawn more susceptible to disease.
- Consider adding a mulching attachment. While it is not necessary, a mulching attachment will cut each blade of grass a few more times.
- Set your mower at the highest setting, leaving grass blades 3” tall.
- Remove no more than the top 1/3 of the grass blade. This will keep the grass healthy and strong.
- Mow when the grass is dry.
- Keep the mower deck clean.



Keep safety in mind. Never leave the discharge shoot of a bagging mower uncovered!

Turn Over a New Leaf

Fallen leaves carry 50-80% of the nutrients that a tree extracts from the soil and air, including carbon, potassium, phosphorus, and others. Why not reuse these nutrients in your own garden? Here are some ways:

- Compost your leaves.
- In the fall, spread leaves over your vegetable garden or flower bed (sheet composting). Leaves may be chopped and mixed with soil to speed decomposition. In the spring, at least a month prior to planting, dig in (or remove) any leaves that have not decomposed.
- Use leaves as a natural mulch around your ornamental plants, bushes and trees.
- Let leaves lie where they fall and mow them into the lawn. Shredded leaves nourish the soil and do not harm the lawn.

When leaves fall to the ground, they are naturally broken down by earthworms and microorganisms. The result is humus, or compost. Humus is light and fluffy and improves the structure of soil.



A “Greener” Backyard

Here are a few tips to make your yard greener:

- Make your lawn area smaller by adding beds with hardy perennials or a rock garden.
- Avoid pesticides unless necessary.
- If you need to fertilize, look for “Earth Friendly” fertilizers with a bright green sticker. These are fertilizers that have slow-release fertilizer and no or low phosphorous.
- Pull weeds by hand to eliminate the need for herbicides.
- Select plants suited for your site conditions (sun/shade, soil type...) Native plants are an excellent choice.
- Mulch around the base of trees to keep roots covered and minimize plant stress.



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