

Fertilize Your Lawn the Easy Way

Disposing of grass clippings is the most labor-intensive part of mowing the lawn for many homeowners. You can skip all that work and let your grass clippings fertilize your lawn for free.

Grass clippings contain nitrogen and phosphorus and can fertilize your lawn naturally. This can cut or eliminate the need for additional fertilizers, which can damage our streams. Clippings can also be composted and used to create high-quality fertilizers for your garden.

Start mowing by making two or three passes blowing grass clippings into the center of your lawn, not the street or driveway. Make sure to mow when grass is dry so that clippings do not clump together. Set the mower to a height of 2½ to 3 inches to better hide clippings and keep a healthier lawn. Mow weekly in the spring and as needed through the summer.

Clippings left on your lawn will biodegrade quickly because they are 90% water. It should not cause thatch buildup. If the grass is very high (say, after returning from a vacation), consider making two cuts: a “trim” with the mower set high, followed a few days later by a cut to your regular length. This will give the clippings a chance to degrade into the lawn and avoid having long clippings covering the lawn.

To be sure you are giving your yard the nutrients it needs and not providing too much fertilizer, test your soil. Contact your local Penn State Extension office to order a soil test kit for only \$9-12 (Delaware County: 610-690-2655, Chester County: 610-696-3500).

For your lawn and your streams, keep your grass clippings on your lawn. Your wallet will also appreciate the change, as you will need fewer fertilizers and less water.

