

Frederick County Division of
Solid Waste & Recycling

GUIDE TO GRASSCYCLING

Mow It,
Leave It,
Watch It Thrive.



What Is It?

Grasscycling is the simple practice of spreading and leaving grass clippings on the lawn when mowing. Once cut, grass clippings first dehydrate, then decompose, quickly disappearing from view.

Quick Tips

- Don't cut more than 1/3 of the grass blade. (Cutting too short and not often enough are common errors of lawn care.)
- Make sure your mower blades are sharp.
- Mow only when the grass is dry.
- Never mow during a drought.
- Prevent excessive turf growth by watering and fertilizing in moderation.

Builds Better Soil

Grass clippings add organic matter to soil. This creates a spongy layer that holds water in drought and allows better drainage during wet weather. Clippings also release nutrients, reducing the need for fertilizers and lawn chemicals.

Reduces Work & Saves Money

Save time and skip raking and bagging your clippings! Letting them lay reduces your workload during mowing, and later, saves time and money as you'll water and fertilize less.

Good For The Environment

In addition to creating a healthier, natural lawn, grasscycling eliminates the need for disposal or processing of clippings, so reduces fuel consumption and pollution.

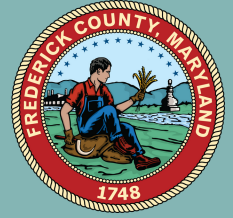
Contact Us: recycle@frederickcountymd.gov

Follow Us: [Facebook.com/FrederickRecycles](https://www.facebook.com/FrederickRecycles)

Use the **Recycle Coach** app!

www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/recycle

GROW A GREENER LAWN: GRASSCYCLE!



Grass clippings contain nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus. Don't let this free fertilizer go to waste! When left laying, clippings rapidly break down and recycle their nutrients back into to the soil. Grasscycling helps prevent nutrient runoff, reduces pollution, and can lessen or eliminate the use of lawn chemicals- that benefits you, your lawn, AND the Chesapeake Bay!

How To Begin

- Follow the "1/3 Rule": mow your lawn often enough so that no more than 1/3 of the length of the grass blade is cut in any one mowing. Frequent mowing will produce short, easy to disperse clippings. You may have to cut the lawn every 7 days when the lawn is growing fast, but only every 7 to 14 days in drier or cooler weather. Sharpen your mower blades for a better cut.
- You can grasscycle with most any mower. If the mower came with a collection bag, remove it. However, if your mower does not have a safety flap covering the opening where the bag fits into the chute, you should purchase a retrofit kit to cover the opening.
- Most lawnmower manufacturers offer bagless "mulching" mowers which cut grass blades into small pieces and direct them down into the soil. These popular machines are highly effective in grasscycling. Electric mowers will further reduce pollution and conserve resources too!

Common Questions

- *Does grasscycling cause thatch?* No! Research has shown that grass clippings are approximately 80-85 percent water with only small amounts and decompose rapidly.
- *Does grasscycling spread lawn disease?* No. Improper watering and fertilizing are the primary cause of disease spread. Lawns only need 1" of water each week, applied in early morning.
- *Is grasscycling messy?* No way! If a lawn is mowed, watered, and fertilized properly, grasscycling can actually produce a neater looking lawn. It is important to cut the lawn frequently enough to produce small clippings that will decompose quickly. If a lawn is allowed to over-grow, the clippings may be heavy and unsightly. Aim to mow every 7 - 14 days, depending on how fast the lawn is growing. If you're worried about people tracking grass into your home or pool, try mowing late in the day so that clippings have time to dry and settle overnight.
- *Are there alternatives to grasscycling?* Yes. 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. Add clippings to your compost pile, or use them as mulch in vegetable gardens or around around trees and shrubs.

GRASSCYCLING: Mow It, Leave It, Watch It Thrive.