

## What Is Grasscycling

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

Grasscycling --

- **Encourages a healthier lawn** by returning nutrients to the soil beneath the lawn.
- **Reduces work** because you don't have to bag or rake and dispose of your clippings.
- **Saves you money** because you don't have to pay for disposal of your clippings.
- **Benefits the environment** by naturally recycling the clippings.

Simply put, grasscycling is good for your lawn and can help you reduce waste. Learn how easy it is for you to begin grasscycling.

## How To Begin

Proper mowing is required for successful grasscycling. Cut grass when the surface is dry, and keep mower blades sharp. 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 clippings that will not cover up the grass surface. You may have to cut the lawn every 7 days when the lawn is growing fast but only every 7 to 14 days when the lawn is growing slowly.

You can grasscycle with most any mower (push, electric or gas). The mower collection bag should be removed to allow clippings to drop on the lawn. However, if your mower does not have a safety flap covering the opening where the bag fits into the chute, it is important that you purchase a retrofit kit from your local retailer.

Most lawnmower manufacturers have developed "mulching" mowers which cut grass blades into small pieces and force them into the soil. These types of mowers are effective in grasscycling and have become very popular. They are sold at many yard and garden equipment retailers, nurseries, and home supply stores.

## Common Grasscycling Questions

### Does grasscycling cause thatch?

No! Research has shown that grass roots are the primary cause of thatch, not grass clippings. Thatch is composed primarily of roots, stems, rhizomes, and other plant materials. These plant materials contain large amounts of lignin (fibrous material) and decompose slowly. Grass clippings are approximately 80-85 percent water with only small amounts of lignin, and decompose rapidly.

### Does grasscycling spread lawn disease?

**No.** Improper watering and fertilizing are the primary cause of disease spread. If an accommodating environment for turfgrass disease is present, infestation will occur whether clippings are collected or not.

### Will grasscycling make my lawn look bad?

No! If a lawn is properly mowed, watered, and fertilized, grasscycling can actually produce a healthier looking lawn. It is important to cut the lawn frequently to produce small clippings that will decompose quickly. If a lawn is not cut frequently and clippings are left on the lawn, it will produce a "hay-like" look which can be unsightly.

### Are there alternatives to grasscycling?

Yes! Grasscycling 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, flowerbeds, and shrubs.

### Does grasscycling require special equipment?

Refer to your owner's manual or contact a local lawnmower dealer to learn if you can safely grasscycle. You may need to purchase a retrofit kit, and your mower dealer can assist you with selecting the correct one. Mulching mowers make grasscycling easy by cutting grass blades into small pieces and forcing them into the soil. Electric mulching mowers can also help reduce air pollution.