



## GRASSCYCLING

Grasscycling (sometimes called mulching) is the natural recycling of grass by leaving clippings on the lawn while mowing.

### **Why do it?**

Grasscycling provides free fertilizer. Leaving grass clippings on your lawn can provide 15-20% of the lawn's fertilizer needs because grass clippings return nitrogen to the soil.

### **What about thatch buildup?**

Grass clippings don't cause thatch. Grass clippings (if not too long) decompose rapidly and are 80-85% water.

### **Proper mowing**

Mow regularly every 5 to 7 days. A basic rule of thumb is to remove only 1/3 of total grass height at one time. Prolonged rain may make it difficult to mow regularly. If you have to cut more than 1/3 of the grass blade in one mowing, bag the grass and add it to your compost bin. You can grass cycle with almost any lawn mower, simply by covering the chute where your collection bag sits. Several brands of mulching or recycling mowers are available and are very effective.

### **Guidelines for mowing heights**

Generally, in the summer you should cut your grass to a height of 2 to 2 ½ inches for lawns composed of Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, fine fescue, tall fescue, or a combination of these grasses. Leaving your lawn a little longer during hot weather can protect the grass roots and reduce drought and heat damage.

### **Mow with a sharp blade**

Dull blades can give the lawn a ragged appearance and increase disease potential. Also, change mowing direction each time you mow.

### **When to water is important**

Save water and money by watering your lawn in the early morning. The least amount of water will be lost to evaporation at that time. Avoid watering at night, especially if nearby plants stay wet overnight. An early morning watering schedule reduces disease problems and poor water distribution caused by wind.