

Art by Joey Williams (Grade 7-9)



## How do you dispose of grass clippings after mowing the lawn?

- Put them in the garbage?
- Put them on the curb for collection?
- Compost them?

## Why not **LEAVE IT** ON THE LAWN?

### That will:

- Benefit the environment
- Improve your lawn
- Save time
- Save landfill space

### FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- One-quarter acre of lawn produces more than 1½ tons of clippings during the growing season!
- Time spent on lawn care decreases with the elimination of bagging, even when mowing increases to once every four to seven days!

### For more information on “Leave It On The Lawn” or backyard composting, call:

The Composting Hotline at 518-402-8705, or write to:  
 NYSDEC  
 625 Broadway  
 Albany, NY 12233-7253,  
 or e-mail us at:  
[dshmwrr@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:dshmwrr@gw.dec.state.ny.us)  
 and check out our webpage at:  
[www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/294.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/294.html)  
 or call your local Cornell Cooperative Extension office



Let's **LEAVE IT** ON THE LAWN  
 NEW YORK



Art by Taylor DiCuzzo (Grade 4-6)

[www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)



## Why You Should **LEAVE IT ON THE LAWN**

- Reduces the amount and frequency of fertilizer application and costs
- Returns nutrients to the soil
- Saves time because the grass is no longer bagged
- Reduces the amount of garbage by about 10%

### HOW TO **LEAVE IT ON THE LAWN**

Allow your grass to grow to three inches, and then cut no more than one inch off the top. This is the “one-third” rule. It helps develop a deeper root system, which is a natural defense against weeds, disease and drought.

### **Common Questions**

#### **1. Do grass clippings cause thatch?**

**No.** Thatch is an accumulation of the “woody” parts of the grass plant, not the clippings and is most often caused by too much watering and fertilizing.

#### **2. Isn't it more work to mow the lawn often enough to keep clippings short?**

**No.** Cutting grass before it is overgrown is easier and faster, and leaving clippings on the lawn further reduces workload.

#### **3. What if my lawn grows too high between mowings to leave the clippings?**

**You have several options.** You can mow the clippings to further shred and scatter them. You can raise the mower's height so only the top-third of the grass blade is removed, and then gradually lower the mower height for the next several mowings.

#### **4. Do I need a mulching mower?**

**No.** Mulching blades and adaptor kits are available for many types of lawn mowers. When it is time to replace your mower, consider purchasing an electric mulching mower.

### **OTHER USEFUL LAWN INFORMATION**

- Watering your lawn is best done in the early morning. An inch of water per week is sufficient for good root growth.
- Fertilizing varies with soil types and growing conditions. The rule of thumb is two to four pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn per year.
- Test the soil to determine your fertilizer needs, and remember to adjust the pH of the soil to between 6.5 and 7.2. This will improve the efficiency of the nutrients.

*Studies have shown that grass recycling reduces the need for fertilizer by 25%.*

### **Do You Compost Yard Debris?**

If you don't want to leave grass clippings on your lawn, try backyard composting, which is simple and beneficial. Methods of backyard composting range from creating a simple pile of compost to purchasing a composting bin.

For some **great tips** on caring for your lawn naturally, check DEC's webpage on Green Lawns and Gardens at:  
[www.dec.ny.gov/public/44290.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/public/44290.html)

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