

Grass & Leaves – Cut Them & Leave Them



You'll save 20-25% of your time by not having to stop and empty your lawnmower bag, rake leaves, gather leaves, and haul them to other locations. You'll reduce the need to fertilize (25 – 50% less), since grass and leaf clippings return nutrients to the soil and block weed growth.



Grass clippings and fall leaf collections are a major part of New Jersey's municipal solid waste stream, block storm drains, and reduce water quality when entering streams. Reduce waste at the source. Leave grass and leaf clippings on your lawn when you mow, and let nature do the recycling.



Warren Township Green Team
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Maintain Proper Lawn Height

To maintain your lawn properly, mow high and often, so that you only take off about 1/3 of the length of the grass and keep leaves from smothering the grass. The result will be an attractive, neatly trimmed lawn, and clippings will disappear when they filter down to the soil. Most New Jersey lawns should be mowed 2 ½ - 3 ½" high, especially in summer, to shade the soil, cool the roots, and block weed growth. Mulching mowers help to do this; they chop the clippings into fine pieces that slip easily down to the soil. Many new mowers are mulching mowers, or you can attach mulching equipment to your existing mower.

Clippings & oak leaves don't cause Thatch

Controlling watering rates will help your lawn grow at manageable levels until the lawn is dry. If it turns blue-green or gray, or if footprints don't spring back, it's time to water. Provide about an inch at a time for clay soil, and half an inch for sandy soil. Place a few cans around the lawn and note how long it takes for that much water to collect. Even in dry periods, lawns usually need a thorough watering only once a week, or twice if soils are sandy. If managed carefully, water will soak the soil four to six inches down, just right for building healthy root systems and greener growth. Early morning watering conserves water by preventing evaporation.

Grass clippings and shredded leaves don't cause thatch. Thatch is formed from the accumulation of dead roots and stems. The more you fertilize and water your lawn, the faster grass grows, and thatch accumulates. Applying too many lawn products, too often, costs money and may harm the lawn. It is best to mulch mow dry leaves before the layer of leaves is thick. It is perfectly fine to mulch mow oak leaves as these leaves do not alter the acidity of the soil.

New Jersey soils may be improved and more productive by adding organic matter such as grass clippings and shredded leaves. When you cut them and leave them, the nitrogen from these

clippings will add one to two pounds of nitrogen a year to each thousand square feet of lawn, block weed growth and improve the water- and nutrient-holding capacity of the soil. Adding shredded leaves to plants in the fall, protects plants against drying winds and freezing weather and provide refuge for wildlife.

Grass clippings and shredded leaves offer so many benefits to our lawn and gardens. Whatever way you decide to use them, be sure to cut them and leave them to divert a large amount of waste from the solid waste stream.

For more information, contact:
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