**LAWN CARE WASTE REDUCTION TIPS**

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 try to “LEAVE IT ON THE LAWN!” It will:

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

**WHY YOU SHOULD “LEAVE IT ON THE LAWN”**

- Benefits the environment by reducing the amount and frequency of fertilizer application. Grass clippings are 80% water and contain 2–4% nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and other nutrients. This is also good for you (lower fertilizer costs).
- Improves your lawn. Leaving grass clippings on the lawn returns nutrients to the soil resulting in healthier turf.

- **Saves time.** Since the grass is no longer bagged, fewer stops are required.
- **Reduces the amount of garbage you throw out.** Grass clippings can account for as much as 10% of the garbage we produce.

**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. This helps develop a deeper root system which is a natural defense against weeds, disease and drought.

During fast growing periods you may have to cut the grass every four to seven days.

**COMMON QUESTIONS**

1. **Do grass clippings cause thatch?**
   No. Thatch is an accumulation of the “woody” parts of the grass plant: stems, roots and stolons, not the clippings. Thatch is most often caused by over watering and over fertilizing.

2. **Isn’t it more work to mow the lawn often enough to keep the clippings short?**
   No. Cutting grass before it is overgrown is easier and faster. Eliminating the time and effort it takes to bag clippings further shortens the mowing time.

3. **What if my lawn grows too high between mowings to leave the clippings?**
   You have several options. You may mow over the clippings to further shred and scatter them. You may raise the mower height so only the top third of the grass blade is removed and then gradually lower the mower height over the span of 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.
DO YOU COMPOST YARD DEBRIS?

If you don’t want to leave grass clippings on your lawn, try backyard composting.

Composting your organic wastes in the backyard is simple and beneficial.

There are many methods to backyard composting ranging from a simple pile to a purchased composting bin.

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

The Composting Hotline at
(518) 457-8704
or write to:

Bureau of Waste Reduction & Recycling
Division of Solid & Hazardous Materials
NYSDEC
625 Broadway
Albany, NY 12233-7253

Or contact your local Cornell Cooperative Extension Office.