

Grasscycling and garden waste

Are you seeking an easy way to cut down on lawn mowing time while doing something positive for the environment?

Stop bagging the grass!

A recent study by the Memphremagog MRC revealed that organic matter accounts for 40 % of garbage container waste. While a significant proportion originates from the house (kitchen scraps, soiled cardboard and paper), nearly 10% comes from the garden.

The many advantages of grasscycling:

- Benefits the environment, both agronomically and in terms of greenhouse gas reduction
- Reduces the amount of time devoted to lawn maintenance
- Decreases the amount of organic waste processed by the municipality, potentially reducing the costs associated with waste collection, transportation and processing
- Lessens the impacts of transportation and processing on the environment
- Increases lawn resistance to drought and disease
- Decreases the use of fertilizers
- Is an easy habit to get into!

Source: Recyc-Québec

By recycling grass clippings and keeping them on your lawn, you allow nutrients to return into the ground, which also has the effect of strengthening and enhancing your lawn naturally. Moreover, grass clippings provide an important source of moisture for your lawn since grass contains more than 90% water.

Tips for creating and maintaining a healthy lawn:

1. The grass should be mowed to a height of about 7 cm (3 in), and never less than 4 cm (1.5 in). Doing so ensures a robust lawn, eliminates weed seedlings and helps the soil to retain moisture.
2. Mow your lawn regularly.
3. Set the height of the mower 5-7 cm (2-3 in) from the ground. Never remove more than the top third of the height of the grass when mowing. Cutting the grass too close to the ground harms the lawn. Indeed, by overcutting you may sever the crown of the blade of grass - the part at the base – which will cause the grass to starve, as a too-short lawn is unable to sustain the healthy root system necessary to provide it with sufficient water and nutrients.

4. Ensure that the mulching blade on your mower is well honed. A dull blade shreds grass, making it vulnerable to disease. Moreover, mulching blades cut the grass several times, resulting in a very short lawn.

Source: Compost Council of Canada

If the grass is too long or too thick, resulting in excessive grass clippings, gather them up and put a 15 cm (6 in) layer in your home composter. The addition of grass contributes to the breakdown of other food and garden waste. Freshly cut grass is a green matter, rich in nitrogen, while dried grass is a brown matter, rich in carbon. Carbon and nitrogen are two of the elements required for a successful compost. Cut grass can also be used as mulch around trees, shrubs and vegetables to enrich and moisten the soil.

Other garden waste

Dead leaves: Use some of them in your home composter. Leave some on the ground, shredding them with the lawnmower to protect and fertilize your lawn during the cold season. Leftover leaves may be put in the brown bin.

Grass clippings (brown or green): Leave grass clippings on the ground to help fertilize your lawn. Excess grass can be placed in your home composter or in the brown bin (to maintain the brown-green balance, add dead leaves when necessary).

Small branches, bark, wood chips: Leave them on the ground in a wooded part of your property, or cut them in small pieces and place them in your brown bin (branches should be less than 2 cm in diameter and 60 cm long).

Weeds: The heat produced by the home composting process is not sufficient to destroy weed seeds. It is thus preferable to put them in the brown bin.