



## VILLAGE OF HALES CORNERS

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### LEAVE THEM LIE - GRASSCYCLING

Grasscycling is leaving grass clippings on the lawn to decompose. Grass clippings are mostly water. When you mow regularly, clippings quickly decompose and release nutrients to fertilize the lawn.

#### Why Grasscycle?

- It reduces yard waste by 20% - 40% or more.
- It saves the time, trouble, and expense of bagging or putting clippings in cans.
- It saves gas and energy required to transport and process grass clippings.
- It reduces the need for fertilizer. Research shows that when you leave grass clippings on the lawn, you need as much as one third less fertilizer to achieve the same color and grass density found on lawns where the clippings are removed.
- It reduces the demand for water.
- It provides moisture and nutrients to the soil and cushioning layers to reduce wear.

#### Getting Started

Just let your grass clipping from your mower or mulching mower lie where they fall. Remember, you only want to remove about 1/3 of the grass blade when you mow. With Kentucky bluegrass and fescue a final turf height of 2 inches is usually recommended. This means mowing off about 1 inch when the grass gets to be 3 inches in overall height. Thatch is not caused by letting grass clippings fall to the lawn, at least when the lawn is mowed on a regular basis. The young grass clippings are over 90% water, and they decompose rapidly (UW Extension InfoSource).

University of Minnesota (U of M) studies show the reduced need for nitrogen fertilization of turf when leaving grass clippings on the lawn. Table 13 shows nitrogen recommendations for established lawns and Table 14 recommends the best time to apply any fertilizer still needed. Both tables are from the Established Lawns and Turf section of the Soil.

Table 13. Annual nitrogen recommendations for an established lawn or turfgrass area

Maintenance Practices	Soil organic matter level <sup>1</sup>		
	Low	Medium to high	Organic soil
Amount of nitrogen (N) to apply <sup>2,3</sup> ----- lb. N/1000 sq. ft. -----			
Regular irrigation			
Clippings removed	4.0	3.0□	2.00□
Clippings not removed	3.0	2.0□	1.00□
No irrigation		□	
Clippings removed	2.0	1.0□	0.50□
Clippings not removed	1.0	0.5	0.25

Table 14. Timing of annual nitrogen fertilizer applications to established lawn or turfgrass; apply no more than 1 lb. of quick-release nitrogen/1000 sq. ft. in a single application

Number of Applications Required	Optimum timing of applications
1	early Sept.
2	mid to late-Aug. // mid-Oct.
3	May or June // mid to late Aug. // mid-Oct.
4	May or June // Aug. // Sept. // mid-Oct.

<sup>1</sup>Low organic matter = less than 3.1%, medium to high = 3.1 to 19%, organic soil = greater than 19% organic matter.

<sup>2</sup>Multiply by 44 to convert the rates in lb./1000 sq. ft. to lb./acre.

<sup>3</sup>Apply no more than 1 lb. of quick-release N/1000 sq. ft. in a single application.