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GRASS RECYCLING – CUT IT & LEAVE IT!

By Tom Walsh
SP Green Team Member

Lawn experts at Rutgers University and other research centers have found that short grass clippings left on your lawn act as a natural fertilizer, producing a healthier lawn that greens up earlier in the spring and stays green later into the fall. The research also found the grass clippings shelter the tender grass roots from the sun and conserve moisture, help to create a thicker, healthier lawn that is more resistant to weeds and certain lawn diseases. "Grasscycling" DOES NOT cause thatch. Short clippings decompose within a few days.

Grasscycling saves your time. Experts say we spend as much as 35% of our mowing time getting rid of the clippings: emptying the mower bag, raking, filling the lawn waste bags and bringing them to our compost yard. Grasscycling also decreases the need to fertilize your lawn thus saving you money. By grasscycling you only need to fertilize once or twice per year.

If you have no other choice but to bag the clippings, you can use them as mulch around plants and in your garden to reduce weed growth or add them to your compost pile. These tips and other tips can be found at the Middlesex County Improvement Authority's website at www.mciauth.com or by calling 1-800-488-MCIA. You can also call Rutgers Cooperative Extension @ (732-398-5260 or visit www.rce.rutgers.edu.

There is no excuse for sweeping grass and/or leaves into the storm drains or waterways. Stormwater runoff from lawn maintenance is a contributor to water pollution. It can harm bodies of water by increasing the levels of sediment & suspended solids, which lower the oxygen levels in water bodies creating poor water quality. Just blowing grass clippings out into the street has the same result, since they will wash into the storm drains in the next heavy rain. South Plainfield Borough Code 288, Littering, prohibits any kind of yard waste on sidewalks, in gutters and in catch basins. Borough Code 403, Stormwater Management, prohibits disposal in storm drains of any materials other than stormwater.

Lastly, with the anticipation of spring rain events the mosquitoes will be out in full force. The NJ Department of Health and the NJ Department of Environmental Protection Agency are asking homeowners, businesses and contractors working on construction to drain sources of water outdoors and routinely check their property for containers collecting water where mosquitoes can breed. For more information on NJ's efforts to reduce the mosquito population, log onto the Department of Health's webpage at http://nj.gov/health/cd/westnile/index.shtml or the Department of Environmental Protection's website at http://nj.gov/dep/mosquito.

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