The key word is "LESS" -

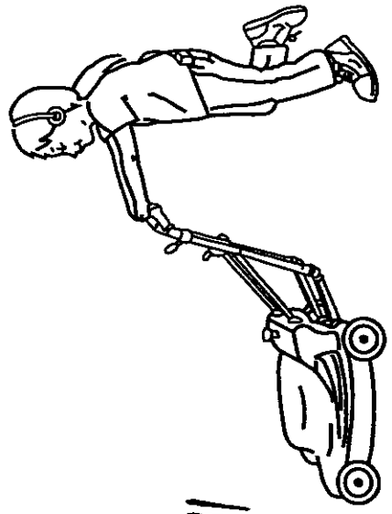
- **LESS FERTILIZER**
- **LESS WATER**
- **LESS WORK**
- **LESS WASTE**

Recycling clippings back into the lawn is less work than disposing of them as waste. No one has to handle the clippings--not you, your lawn care professional, or the waste management crew. By not trashing grass, you can reduce your mowing time by nearly 40 percent and spend less money on fertilizer and trash bags. And you'll be doing your part for the environment by reducing waste.

If you follow these *"IT'S OKAY TO LET IT LAY"* guidelines, not only will you have a healthy lawn, you'll never have to bag grass clippings again.

CHESTER COUNTY RECYCLES

Chester County Solid Waste Authority
7224 Division Highway
Narvon, PA 17555



It's Okay to "Let It Lay"

It's Okay to "Let It Lay"

Did you know that a 1/2-acre lawn in Pennsylvania produces more than three tons--nearly 260 bags--of grass clippings each year? Think of all the time, money and effort it takes to bag all those clippings. Why go through all that hassle when it's not necessary?

You can have a healthy green lawn by leaving grass clippings where they fall.

It's simple. Grass clippings left on the lawn decompose and act as a natural organic fertilizer. This lets you reduce the amount of commercial fertilizer you need to apply. Your lawn will remain healthy and green because each time you mow, you will be returning valuable nutrients to the soil.

DEP

CHESTER COUNTY SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY

Mowing Techniques & Tips

Any mower can recycle grass clippings. Just remove the grass catcher. Ask your lawn mower dealer if you need a special safety plug or adaptor kit to convert your mower into a "recycling" mower. Installing a mulching blade also is helpful.

Never cut off more than 1/3 of the grass blade in one mowing. Keep grass mowed to 2" in early spring, gradually raise the height to 3-4" by summer, then gradually reduce to 2" by late fall.

Mow when the grass is dry.

Keep your mower blade sharp. Dull mowers tear the grass blade, injure the plant and cause a brownish cast to the turf.

If the grass gets too high, **mow over the clippings a second time** to further shred and scatter them.

To prevent excess growth between mowings, **raise the mower height, mow, then gradually lower it** over a span of several mowings. This will help prevent shock to the plants.

When it's time to replace your mower, **consider a mulching, recycling, or nonpolluting reel mower.** All of them do a good job of shredding and scattering grass clippings.

What About Thatch?

Thatch, a matted layer of dead roots and stems, usually is caused by too much water and fertilizer. Clippings don't produce thatch since they are 80 percent water and decompose quickly. A thatch layer of more than 1/2" should be removed.

Uses for Clippings

Compost. Fresh clippings should compose no more than 1/3 of the compost pile. They are an excellent source of nitrogen. Mix thoroughly with "brown" materials such as leaves or straw, and turn the pile regularly to aerate it and prevent odors.

Mulch. Pile about 1" of dried clippings on the soil to reduce weeds and moderate soil temperature. Mulching also controls erosion, run-off and evaporation. If using herbicides, wait at least two mowings after treating the lawn to use the clippings.

Soil Additive. Mixing fresh grass clippings into the garden improves soil texture, promotes moisture retention and adds nutrients and organic matter. About once a month, turn a 2" layer of grass into the soil to a depth of 6".

Fertilizer Application

Most grasses need modest amounts of nitrogen for controlled growth and good color. Too much fertilizer increases growth and results in more frequent mowing.

It is best to fertilize around Labor Day and again at the end of October. Fall fertilization promotes a vigorous root system and helps the plant survive winter, but does not lead to the excessive top growth of spring fertilization. Apply only 1/2 pound of nitrogen per 100 square feet of lawn. To calculate how many pounds of fertilizer should be applied per 1,000 square feet, divide 100 by twice the percentage of nitrogen (N) in the fertilizer.

This chart calculates some of the common fertilizer rates for you:

Fertilizer NPK Rating %	100 ÷ (2 x N%)	=	Lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft.
12-4-8	**100/24**	=	**4.1**
16-8-8	**100/32**	=	**3.1**
20-5-10	**100/40**	=	**2.5**
10-10-10	**100/20**	=	**5.0**

For slower, more uniform growth, use fertilizers that contain slow-release nitrogen such as methylene urea, ureaformaldehyde, sulfur-coated urea, or IBDU. The label may also read "water-insoluble nitrogen" or "slow release nitrogen."

Watering Practices

Pennsylvania has enough rain that **turf grasses don't have to be watered to survive.** Healthy lawns go brown during a drought, but quickly turn green when rainfall resumes.

If you choose to water, **1" of water will wet the soil to a depth of 4"- 6".** Place an empty can under the sprinkler to determine when an inch has been applied. If water runs off the lawn before reaching an inch, turn off the sprinkler and wait an hour before resuming.

Water deeply and infrequently to encourage deep root growth. Light, frequent watering encourages shallow roots, which increase the risk of disease and stress injury.

Water in the morning. Less water is lost through evaporation and transpiration.

Don't water at mid-day or in the evenings. A lawn that remains damp during the night is more prone to disease.

Alternative Landscapes

Consider turf grass alternatives. Increase shrub beds, grow a wildflower meadow, or plant ground covers such as English ivy, pachysandra and periwinkle. They look beautiful, don't need mowing and will help reduce maintenance and yard waste.