Consider Composting

Grass clippings can be composted when it is impossible to leave them on the lawn. If composted alone, grass clippings tend to mat together, depriving the composting microbes of oxygen and causing a bad odor.

Therefore, it is essential to mix grass clippings with leaves in a ratio of three parts leaves to one part grass clippings. Also, turning the compost pile with a pitchfork will add oxygen to the compost and eliminate odors. The addition of lime may also be helpful.

Earth Machine home-composting bins are available for purchase from several Westchester County parks. Grass clippings and food waste combined with leaves can generate high quality compost in as little as six weeks.

With collection and disposal costs close to $100 per ton, keeping your yard waste out of the garbage truck saves money and protects the environment.

For More Information

For more information on ecologically sound lawn care, composting and gardening contact:

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Westchester County

http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/westchester/
26 Legion Drive
Valhalla, New York 10595
(914) 285-4640

For more information on waste reduction and recycling contact:

Westchester County Recycling HelpLine
www.westchestergov.com/recycling
(914) 813-5425

Westchestergov.com

Robert P. Astorino
Westchester County Executive

REDUCE REUSE RECYCLE
Westchester County DEF - RECYCLING OFFICE

REMEMBER
BUY WHAT YOU NEED
AND USE WHAT YOU BUY

Thomas J. Lauro, P.E., Commissioner

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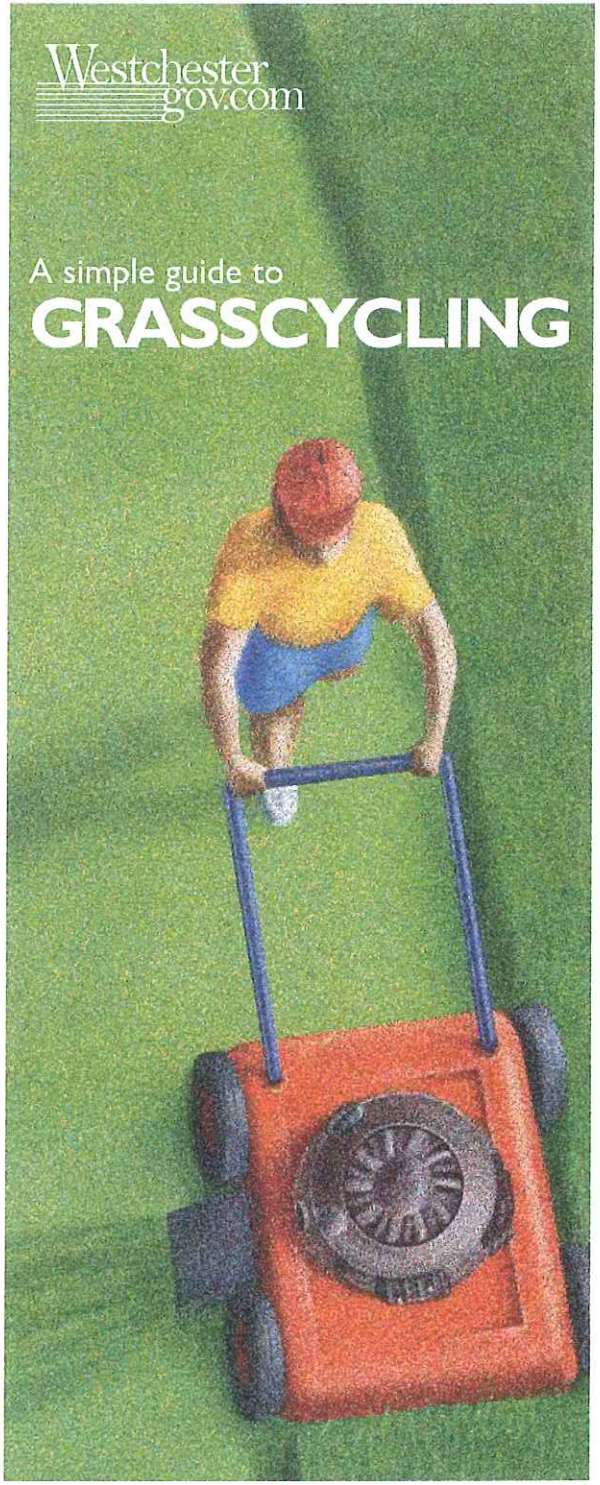
A simple guide to

GRASSCYCLING



Why Grasscycle?

Grasscycling refers to leaving grass clippings on the lawn after mowing. Clippings are a valuable organic product that can help maintain a vigorous, healthy and durable lawn. Grass clippings are also a major part of Westchester County's solid waste stream. By grasscycling, you save time, money, and do something positive for the environment.

Save Time, Money, Protect our Water Supply and Reduce Waste.

You can reduce your mowing time by 25-30% by leaving clippings on the lawn. Raking, emptying mower bags and taking trips to the curb are eliminated. Also, you won't need to buy lawn trash bags.

Clippings left on the lawn save you about 25% of your annual fertilizer costs. Grass clippings contain nitrogen, a valuable soil nutrient. Less fertilizer is necessary to maintain your lawn when you grasscycle. This protects our water supply from contamination from fertilizer.

Grasscycling will not create an unsightly lawn. Frequent mowing or using a mulching mower produces short clippings that disappear quickly. Mulching blades force grass clippings down into the base of the lawn.

Mow when your grass is dry and 3 to 4 inches tall. Never cut it shorter than 1 ½ to 2 inches. If the lawn is too long the grass clippings will stay on the top of the lawn longer. Also, proper mowing allows grass to develop a large and deep root system, which is a strong defense against weeds and drought.

Use a sharp mower blade or a mulching mower if you have one. A sharp blade and frequent mowing means finer clippings which decompose quickly. If you have trouble using your mower without the bagger, call your dealer for assistance.

Avoid over-fertilizing your lawn. Fertilize the lawn twice a year in May and September. A Soil Test Kit, available at most gardening and lawn supply stores, can help you determine how much you need to apply.

Limit or eliminate the use of lawn chemicals. Diagnose lawn problems and apply corrective measures only as needed. This will save you money and help protect our local water supply.

Apply a top dressing of ½ inch sifted compost, when needed, and apply disease-resistant seed varieties. This is an economical way to maintain a healthy turf.

Mulch with a 2 to 4 inch grass layer in your garden beds. Mulch is a layer of nutrient rich organic material placed on a soil surface to enrich it. Mulching conserves moisture, restricts weed growth and improves the vitality of a garden. If you want to collect your clippings occasionally, they are an excellent mulching material. Avoid mulching with grass that's been recently treated with herbicides that can harm your plants. Chemically treated clippings should be left on the lawn or composted, where herbicides will break down. Following any herbicide application, you can use clippings after three mowings.

For more information on ecologically sound lawn care, composting and problem shooting (including weed and pest issues) contact Cornell Cooperative Extension of Westchester County at http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/westchester/ and (914) 285-4640.

Remember: Grassycling is Not an All or Nothing Proposition.

You may choose to collect your clippings every third time you mow, or every other time. Regardless, you're creating a savings for yourself and the environment.

For more information about waste reduction and recycling visit www.westchestergov.com/recycling or call the Westchester County Recycling HelpLine at (914) 813-5425.