

Lawn Clippings—There's Gold in that Green!

So you're ready for another season of mowing—but what are you going to do with all your grass clippings? Your best option is to leave them alone. Yes, just leave them lay right there on your lawn! As the grass clippings decompose, they will provide a source of nitrogen for your lawn, reducing your fertilizer needs and saving you money.

But the mounds of grass look too untidy? If you have mounds of grass laying in your yard when you are finished, you need to look at your mowing practices. You should never remove more than 1/3 of the entire length of the grass. Removing too much at once stresses the plants, leaving your lawn vulnerable to diseases and weed infestations. To put that into perspective, if your grass clippings are 3 inches long your grass should have been 9 inches high before mowing. If your blade height is set at 3 inches, mow when the grass is no taller than 4 ½ inches high.

If you're still determined to bag and remove those grass clippings, then try composting them! Compost provides nutrients and organic matter to improve your soil. Compost is great for the garden, but can also be used as mulch around trees, shrubs and other plantings. And composting is easy! Just find an out of the way spot to make a pile of leaves, grass clippings, weeds and other yard waste. That's all you have to do. In about 1 year, the insides and bottom of the pile will be composted and ready to use. Turning the pile occasionally will speed up the process.

And just when you thought the job was all done—don't forget to sweep up! Grass clippings left in the road or on the driveway will wash away in the next rain. Runoff will move the grass clippings into the storm drain where they will be delivered to the nearest stream, lake or river. Grass clippings are great for your yard, but they damage our waterways, fueling weed and algae growth. So keep yard waste at home and put it to work for you. It gives a whole new meaning to green and gold!