

FAQs

What can I do when rainy weather or vacations prevent me from mowing my lawn frequently?

When your lawn gets much longer than 4", the grass tends to mat and clump when cut. You may want to collect your clippings and use them as mulch around shrubs. Allow at least two weeks following an herbicide application before using treated grass as mulch. Grass clippings from Ann Arbor residents are accepted at no charge at the Municipal Compost Center, 4150 Platt Road near E. Ellsworth, Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Check in at the blue "MRF" scalehouse before depositing clippings at the site. As demonstrated through compost test results, herbicides are able to decompose at the Compost Center due to high heat (over 130°) and frequent turning to aerate and expose the materials to sunlight.

Can I compost grass clippings in a pile?

Yes, however the high nitrogen grass clippings need to be mixed at least 50/50 with brown fall leaves or other high carbon materials to slow down the rapid decomposition of the high nitrogen grass clippings, which can become anaerobic and create odors if left in a solid grass pile. Just add 75-50% **high carbon** dry leaves, straw, sawdust or torn strips of newspapers with the clippings for an ideal compost environment. Turn the pile occasionally and reap the benefit of composted humus to enhance your garden soil.

Won't feeding my lawn with grass clippings cause thatch?

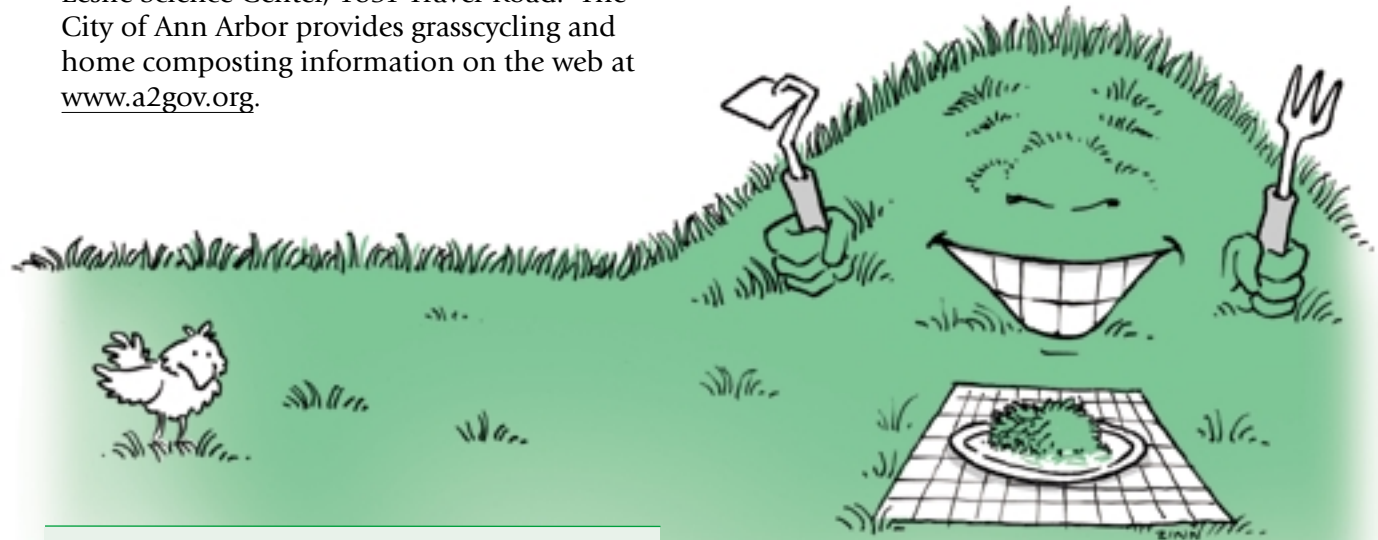
Thatch is the woody portion of the grass plant- the roots, rhizomes and dead lower leaf sheaths at the ground level. Grass clippings are not thatch and do not cause thatch.

Where can I get more information about environmentally-sound yard care practices and home composting?

The Washtenaw County Cooperative Extension Service's Master Gardener Program, 997-1819, provides free phone consultation. Project Grow Community Gardens hosts a Compost Education Demonstration Area at Leslie Science Center, 1831 Traver Road. The City of Ann Arbor provides grasscycling and home composting information on the web at www.a2gov.org.

FEED YOUR LAWN

with grass clippings



Compiled from the *Michigan Master Composter Manual, Third Edition 1998*, produced by the Michigan Recycling Coalition with the Michigan Composting Council, Southeast Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority and Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Services. Printed on recycled paper with soy inks. June 2004

Provided by the City of Ann Arbor

Good Reasons to Feed your Lawn

Saves you time and money. You can mow once and be done with lawn work. No need to bag, store and haul grass clippings to the curb for weekly pickup! Longer grass encourages deeper root growth to crowd out weeds and reduces the need for frequent watering.

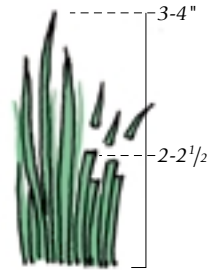
Provides a free source of fertilizer for your lawn. Every 35-gallon can of grass clippings contains one-quarter pound of organic nitrogen. Grasscycling is a term coined by the Professional Lawn Care Association by its members to help promote healthy lawns.

Grass clippings are not accepted with the Compostable collection in the City of Ann Arbor by City regulation and are banned from landfills by State Law.

How to Feed Your Lawn with Grass Clippings

Cut it high and dry, let it lie.

- Set your mower blade to 2 or 2 1/2 inches.
- Mow when your grass is dry and 3 to 4 inches tall.



The grass blade is 85% water and will decompose in a few days.

Mowing Tips

Practice safe mowing habits. Operate your mower as directed in its manual. Wear appropriate shoes and keep children, pets and guests at a safe distance.

Keep mower blades sharp. Your work will go much faster by cleanly cutting the grass rather than tearing each grass blade. Also, torn grass is more susceptible to turf diseases.

Wash the underside of your power mower. A clogged deck won't mulch or discharge well.

Avoid grass clumps by clipping only 1 or 1 1/2 inches of dry grass at any one time.

A Word (or two) About Mower Options

You do not have to buy a new mulching mower in order to "feed your lawn" with grass clippings. **Power and "reel" mowers** can be operated without a grass catcher. Just activate the grasscycling option on your mower (installed on all power mowers since 1994) and remove the bag. (If you can't locate your mower manual, area mower stores and web sites handling your brand of mower can be consulted for the proper way to switch from the bagging option to grasscycling.)

If you are planning to purchase a new power mower, **dedicated mulchers** or **multi-use power mowers** are a good investment. **Mulching mowers** are designed to cut and re-cut the clippings until they are fine enough to sift deep into the turf. **Multi-use mowers** allow for an optional bagging attachment for optional grass or leaf collection.

