

WATER

When To Water

Your lawn needs water when the grass is walked on and the grass blades stay bent and/or they are a duller color. The best time to water is in the morning between 6am and 10am or later in the evening to avoid evaporation. Avoid watering at night because a damp lawn is more prone to lawn disease.

Water deeply and less frequently to encourage deep root growth. Frequent, light watering encourages shallow root growth.

How much water?

Your lawn only needs 2.5cm per week of water, rain fall included.

To test how long to water: Place an empty tuna can on the lawn, and time how long it takes the container to fill 2.5cm.

WEEDS

Weed control begins with a healthy lawn. This is achieved through proper fertilization, irrigation and mowing. Remove problems weeds by hand in the spring and fall.

Think twice before using “Weed and Feed” and other pesticides which can damage soil and lawn health, as well as pollute water ways.

Rethink what a weed is. While a lawn that is completely free of weeds might look nice, it is not necessary. Certain weeds can provide flowers for beneficial insects and other weeds can be helpful for the overall benefit of your lawn. Before you rip it out, find out what it can do for you!

FERTILIZERS

How Much Fertilizer?

Use less fertilizer than you think you will need. Most grasses require moderate levels of nitrogen for moderate growth; excessive fertilizer makes grass grow faster, requiring more mowing. Home lawns require 3-4 pounds of nitrogen (in a balanced fertilizer per 350 square meters). Grasscycling provides 1/4 of your lawn’s nitrogen needs.

When To Fertilize:

Fertilize moderately in the fall that will boost spring growth. In the spring fertilize if your lawn needs it and let clippings do the job during the summer.

Hint: For slower, more uniform growth choose fertilizers with one of the following labels.

- “water insoluble nitrogen”
- “slow-release nitrogen”
- “natural organic”

These fertilizers increase the amount of time the grass can use the nutrients.



Location: Growing Knowledge Community Compost Garden Campus Ring Road (UNBC) Prince George

Mailing Address: PO Box 444,
Prince George, B.C. V2L 4S6

Phone: 250.561.7327
Fax: 250.561.7324

Website: reaps.org
Email: recycling@reaps.org

Learn about

NATURAL LAWN CARE





NATURAL LAWN CARE

Why should I practice natural lawn care?

- Uses less water. In the summer, lawn and garden water make up 40% of water use. This is a problem because summer is when water supplies are lowest and when wildlife and people need it most. Much of summer water is wasted by over watering.
- Limits the amount of grass clipping in the landfill. Currently 30 to 40% of garbage sent to the landfill is compostable, and produces methane gas. Instead of going to the landfill grass could be composted or left on the lawn through grasscycling.
- Stops pesticides from lawns polluting streams and lakes. Rainwater can wash chemicals (i.e. pesticides and herbicides) and fertilizers into streams and lakes, polluting the water table.

How can I practice natural lawn care?

- Grasscycling
- Proper watering practices
- Proper use of fertilizers
- Changing weed control practices

GRASSCYCLING

Grasscycling is the natural practice of leaving clippings on lawn when mowing, and allowing the clippings to decompose back into the lawn as a source of nitrogen.

Why Grasscycle?

- Saves you time spent on bagging and hauling clippings.
- Saves money on things like fertilizers, water, and landfill costs.
- Helps the environment (prevents clipping going to landfill, reducing waste).
- Grasscycling produces a healthier and greener lawn because clippings decompose quickly into soil, returning nutrients to soil and feeding soil organisms, thereby lowering the need for chemical fertilizers (leaving clipping on the lawn can supply 1/4 of lawn's nitrogen requirements).
- Grasscycling saves water by shading grassroots, returning moisture to soil and adding moisture-holding organic matter, thereby reducing watering needs.

COMMON GRASSCYCLING QUESTIONS:

Does grass cycling cause thatch?

Grass cycling does not contribute to thatch. Grassroots are the primary cause of thatch which is composed mainly of dead roots and stems.

*Some thatch (approx 0.5 inch) is beneficial to the lawn, providing insulation to the roots and acting as a mulch.

Won't clippings be unsightly?

Grass clippings are composed of 80-85% water, therefore decompose quickly (2-3 days). When lawn is cut properly, clippings are virtually unnoticeable.

HINT: mulching mowers and mulching attachments produce very small clippings that are unnoticeable.

Does grasscycling cause lawn disease?

NO! The primary cause of lawn disease is improper watering or fertilizing, or dull mow-er blades.

HOW DO I PRACTICE GRASSCYCLING?

- Only cut 1/3 of the blade of grass when mowing
- Mow every 5-7 days
- Mow when grass is dry so the clippings scatter easily
- Use a slow-release fertilizer in autumn and spring (fertilizing is not required in the summer)
- Keep mower blades sharp to produce a cleaner cut and to keep clipping smaller
- If the lawn is too wet or long to grass cycle: use clippings as mulch or compost (clippings are a good nitrogen source when fresh and a good carbon source when dry)

