

## Leave Grass Clippings on the Lawn

It is okay to dispose of grass clippings in your curbside compost cart, but you may want to save that valuable space for your food and other yard waste since it's healthier for your lawn to leave the clippings right on the lawn. Grass clippings are mostly water and nitrogen and when returned to the lawn can reduce your need for a chemical source of nitrogen in the form of fertilizer. It's also easier because you don't have to bag or haul the clippings anywhere. You may need to mow a little more often (it's best to cut no more than one third of the grass blade), but it's still less effort than bagging and moving the clippings. If you still want to put the clippings in your curbside compost cart, you may want to contact your hauler and upgrade to a larger compost cart---that will still cost you less than increasing your regular trash service. Please don't throw the clippings in the trash since organic material in the landfill creates methane, a significant contributor to climate change.

Summary of main points to consider:

- Don't use up your curbside compost cart space with grass if you have a large quantity.
- Grass clippings are good for backyard compost bins or leaving on the lawn.
- You could upgrade to a larger compost cart, but you will pay more to put grass in the trash since upgrading compost service is only 75% of the cost of adding trash service.
- Organics in the trash causes methane gas which increases greenhouse gas emissions.
- Grass clippings are mostly water and nitrogen and when returned to the lawns provide nutrients for healthy lawn growth and also encourage earthworms and microorganisms to help decompose them.
- Healthy populations of earthworms and microorganisms maintain healthy soils and can digest thatch.
- Thatch consists of dead grass stems and roots and is not caused by leaving grass clippings on the lawn.
- The best thatch prevention is regular aerating of lawns.
- You can use any mower to accomplish leaving clippings on lawn. Mulching mowers are designed to chop the blade to a small size and you can also retrofit a regular mower to become a mulching mower. Push mowers are energy efficient and will work fine if you keep the blade sharpened.
- Leaving clippings on lawn is less work, saves time, reduces fertilizer needs, is healthy for lawns, and even saves money and reduces greenhouse gas emissions if you used to pay to put it in the trash.

For more information on this topic, visit [www.ext.colostate.edu](http://www.ext.colostate.edu). Click "Online Publications", then "Yard" under "Yard and Garden Publications", then "Lawns: Eliminating Grass Clipping Collection".