

Summer Lawn Tips:

Everyone knows that a properly maintained lawn adds to the beauty and value of a home. A lot of people don't realize that their lawn has a big impact on the environment. Whether this impact is beneficial or harmful depends on the homeowner's lawn care techniques. A healthy lawn will slow down runoff, prevent erosion, and trap sediments and chemicals before they reach the waterways.

Listed below are some environmentally friendly lawn care tips concerning grasscycling, watering and lawn pollution.

Grasscycling – Did you know a ½ acre lawn in Pennsylvania produces more than 3 tons, nearly 260 bags of grass clippings a year? Did you know you can have a green healthy lawn by leaving grass clippings where they fall? The clippings decompose and act as a natural fertilizer. Each time you mow, you return nutrients to the soil, reducing the need to buy fertilizer. Any mower can recycle grass clippings, just remove the grass catcher. Ask your mower dealer if you need a special safety plug or adapter kit. Installing a mulcher blade also is helpful. Never cut off more than 1/3 of the grass in one mowing, mow when the grass is dry, keep your mower blade sharp. Dull mowers tear the grass blade & injure the plant and cause the turf to take on a brownish cast. If the grass gets too high, mow over the clippings a second time to further shred and scatter them. To prevent excess growth between mowing, raise the mower height, this will help prevent shock to the plants.

Watering – Did you know if you choose suitable grasses and plants, watering in the Northeast is usually not necessary? During dry and hot periods, it is normal for grass to turn a yellowish color. This is a natural state called dormancy, which a healthy lawn can withstand. Our grass will bounce back to its vibrant self after the next rainfall. If you must water, place sprinklers in areas where you won't be wastefully watering your sidewalk or driveway. Water deeply and infrequently. Deeper watering encourages the roots of grass to grow long and healthy allowing your lawn to survive drier periods and saving on your water bill. Place an empty coffee can near your sprinkler, when the can has collected an inch of water, stop watering. Most lawns need less than an inch of water to saturate roots 4-6 inches in length.

Lawn Pollution – Did you know your lawn may be harboring various pollutants that may eventually reach your watershed? Fertilizers, pesticides, pet waste, car wash soap, and vehicle fluids can all be picked up by stormwater and carried into storm drains and bodies of water. If you must use fertilizers, use them properly and efficiently to prevent excess runoff. Be sure to clean up after your pet. Pet waste left on the ground allows harmful bacteria, parasites and viruses to enter our waterways. Properly dispose of hazardous materials such as oil, cleaning supplies, and car fluids. Never pour them in the storm Drain! When washing your car, pick an area that doesn't have a storm drain nearby. Remember your lawn is a little part of the entire ecosystem. Promoting a healthy environment starts in your own backyard.

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