

WHAT TO DO WITH THOSE GRASS CLIPPINGS?

Lancaster County Solid Waste Authority mandated that in 1992 yard waste must be handled separately and not be taken out with the regular trash. Below are three simple ways for disposing of your grass clippings:

(1) MULCHING: A simple process of leaving your grass clippings on the lawn when you mow. Mulching reduces the use of bags, reduces trips to the curb, and saves money! Once cut, the grass clippings dehydrate, decompose, and quickly disappear from view. The clippings easily break down and return to the soil within one to two weeks, acting primarily as a fertilizer supplement, and can provide 15%-20% of a lawn's yearly nitrogen requirements.

MOWING: Cut no more than 1/3 of the total height at any one time. This helps prevent clumping and is very healthy for your lawn supplying 25% of your lawn's fertilizing needs. A mulching mower is not necessary, but it can help distribute the clippings more evenly.

CLUMPS: Collect any clumps of grass clippings (both wet and dry). Clumps do not decompose as quickly and can cause matting on the grass and can encourage diseases to spread. The wet clippings can be spread out on some open space, such as your driveway, allowing them to dry. You can then place the dried grass to your compost pile or use as mulch in your gardens.

Mulching encourages a healthier lawn by returning nutrients to the soil beneath it, reduces work because you don't have to bag or rake and dispose of your clippings, saves money because you don't have to pay for disposal of your clippings, and benefits the environment by naturally recycling the clippings.

(2) COMPOSTING: A simple process of placing your grass clippings in a container; and due to nitrogen content, the grass clippings will help speed up the pile's decomposition process.

FILL THE BIN with brown matter such as dry leaves, plant clippings, branches. Layer grass clippings on top.

KEEP THE INGREDIENTS balanced, about 50% wood/paper matter and 50% greens including grass clippings.

ENCOURAGE DECOMPOSITION by turning the contents of the bin frequently, keeping it relatively moist.

A MULCH product will be noticed in approximately two weeks, which can be placed on your garden.

(3) BAGGING: A not-so-simple process that cost money.

KRAFT BAGS: Contact your trash hauler or your local municipality for the cost of Kraft brown bags, or purchase the plastic lawn and leaf bags at your local grocery store.

YARD WASTE: Grass, leaves, sod, weeds, pine cones, pine needles, bush trimmings, garden materials.

WEIGHT: Each bag should not exceed approximately 40 pounds in weight.

TAG: Each bag must have one Yard Waste Tag on it. Call your trash hauler for details on the tags.

CURB: Place the bags at your curb on your trash haulers specified date for yard waste (tag each bag).

Did you know...

That cut grass is dangerous to store in boxes because of fermenting which causes heat that can lead to a fire.

That when grass is cut, as a self-defense mechanism, the grass releases a toxic into the rest of the stem, this is what causes the nice cut grass smell.

That grass clippings are largely made up of water (80% or more).

That grass clippings easily break down feeding your lawn and garden.

That a 1,000 sq. ft. lawn can produce up to 200-500 pounds of clippings a year.

That the clippings keep your garden or flower bed cool, moist & keeps those pesky weeds from sprouting.

Martin's Mulch Products, 55 Woodcrest Drive, Ephrata, PA 17522 is no longer taking bagged leaves/yard waste. Please call Martin's Mulch for more information at 717-733-1602.