



Berkeley Heights Environmental Commission
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It's Your Lawn, Cut it and Leave it

Grass clippings are a major part of New Jersey's municipal solid waste stream. As a Berkeley Heights resident, you are already helping to avoid air pollution and wasted resources by recycling. You can do more by reducing waste at the source. Leave the grass clippings on your lawn when you mow, and let nature do the recycling.

Frequency of mowing is best determined by the rate of growth of the lawn. As a guide, mow as frequently as necessary to remove no more than 1/3 of the leaf height in a single mowing. That is, mow by the time leaves reach a 3¾ inch height when cutting to 2½ inches, or mow by 5¼ nches when cutting to 3½ inches. As a general rule, mowing once a week is adequate for mowing heights between 2½ and 3½ inches; heights of cut below 2½ inches will require more frequent mowing.

It is usually **not** necessary to remove clippings. Returning clippings to the lawn will recycle nutrients to the soil and grass and also reduce waste. Mulching mowers facilitate this by chopping the clippings into smaller pieces.

Contrary to the widespread misconception, returning clippings does not contribute to thatch accumulation in a lawn. However, heavy clipping yield—such as might occur if proper mowing frequency is neglected—might necessitate clipping removal or dispersal to prevent accumulation of large clumps of clippings on the lawn surface, which can smother and kill the grass.

For more information on lawn care, visit:

<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/fs102/>

and

<http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/Grass%20Cut%20It%20and%20Leave%20It.pdf>