

Remove Clippings To Improve Lawn

Give your lawn a healthy, well groomed look this summer by removing grass clippings immediately after mowing, says Dr. William H. Mitchell, extension agronomist at the University of Delaware.

Contrary to popular belief, clippings do not make a lawn green and fertile, he explains. In fact, they may actually harm the grass. Clippings left on the lawn may add to the accumulation of thatch, the dead material around grass roots. This, in turn, interferes with air and water movement and encourages disease.

A thick layer of thatch may prevent rain or irrigation water from reaching the soil, says Mitchell. Under these conditions, grass will grow poorly and will probably become brown and unattractive by mid-summer.

Clippings may be particularly serious early in the season when grass is making active growth. If the grass is unusually tall before mowing and if clippings are overly thick, they may even smother the grass.

To prevent an over accumulation of thatch, attach a tray or bag to your lawn mower to catch clippings, advises Mitchell. If grass is exceptionally tall and the bag fills rapidly, it may be easier to rake the lawn after mowing.

Use clippings as a mulch in your flower or vegetable garden and around ornamentals, he

adds. This will conserve soil moisture and help promote vigorous growth. Spread clippings evenly, taking care not to apply a heavy layer that might prevent water from reaching the soil.

If your lawn has already developed a dense layer of thatch,

remove it immediately. In most areas, thatch removal tools may be rented at a nearby hardware or garden center. This implement has vertical cutting blades which move thatch to the surface where it may be raked and removed. Thatch, like clippings, may be used as a mulch.

Thatch removal should be done when grass is growing

vigorously, says Mitchell. For summer. In bermuda and zoysia, bluegrass and fescue lawns, the thatch should be removed in best time is in the spring or late early or midsummer.

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