

DON'T BAG IT!

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Despite decades of tradition, it is actually good for your lawn to leave the clipping there. The clippings can provide up to 25% of your fertilizer needs. One hundred pounds of grass clippings contain as much as 4 pounds of nitrogen, one pound of phosphorous and three pounds of potassium. Approximately 85% of grass clippings is actually water!

“But I’ll get thatch” is the common excuse for bagging clippings. It has been widely assumed that thatch development is caused by leaving clippings on a lawn. However, thatch is more closely related to over-fertilizing (especially with nitrogen) and compaction of the soil. Compaction can be caused by frequent mowing and foot traffic. Pesticides can also kill the organisms that break down the clippings into useful nutrients. Another common cause of thatch problems is mowing more than 1/3 of the height of the grass.

Fallen leaves contain up to 80% of the nutrients the tree drew out of the air and soil. This makes them excellent mulch for flower beds. If you pile your fall leaves and let them weather over the winter, they will be ready for your flower beds by spring. They provide nutrients, keep weeds down, and prevent those April showers from compacting the soil. Just don’t keep the pile near a stream or slope!