

Don't Bag It Lawn Care Plan

Most people like a beautiful, green lawn and often use more fertilizer and water than necessary. More mowing, extra back breaking work in bagging grass clippings, and higher water bills often result.

Between March and September, the volume of residential solid waste increases 20 to 50 % due to grass clippings. During the spring and summer months, grass clippings strain the garbage collection system using up valuable landfill space.

Grass clippings make an excellent compost for gardens. Compost use is the best way to improve garden soil because it returns nutrients to the soil and improves the soils physical characteristics.

Now consider not bagging your grass. With the Don't Bag It Lawn Care Plan, you won't have to stop every 10 minutes to empty your mower bag. By leaving the clippings on the lawn and allowing them to work their way back into the soil, you'll produce a beautiful, green lawn. Recycle your lawn clippings and save time, energy and money.

Homeowners following this Don't Bag It lawn care plan report they mow their lawns in 38% less time than when they bagged the grass clippings. They also say their lawns are 30% better than they were before Don't Bag It.

Follow this plan and never bag grass clippings again!

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For more information
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Bill Knoop, Extension Turfgrass Specialist, Texas A&M University System developed this plan.

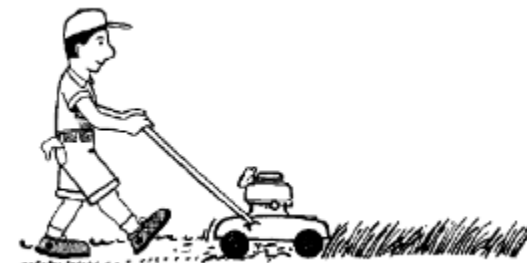
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DON'T BAG IT

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Lawn Care Plan for Texas

For information on **Don't Bag It** you can go to <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/landscape/dont-bag-it/>

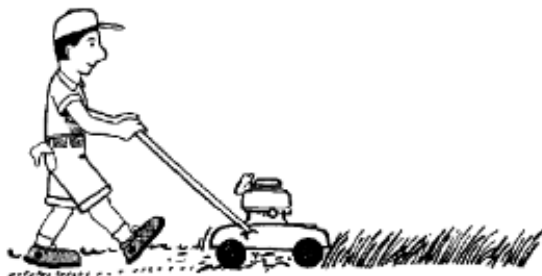
This Don't Bag It Lawn Care Plan will save you time, energy and money too!

Mowing Plan

The rule of thumb for mowing home lawns is not to remove more than one-third of the leaf surface at any one time. With this mowing schedule, you no longer need to bag your grass clippings.

Type of Grass	Optimum Mowing (height)
Common Bermuda	1 ½
Tif Bermuda	1 – 1 ½
Buffalo	2.5
Centipede	2
St. Augustine	3
Zoysia	2 - 3

Grass clippings left on your lawn don't contribute to thatch, but return valuable nutrients to the soil. They contain about 4 % nitrogen, 0.5 % phosphorus and about 2 % potassium, as well as all the necessary minor elements plants need.



Watering Plan

Turfgrasses vary in their need for water:

1. St. Augustine (requires the most)
2. "Tif" Bermuda
3. Zoysia
4. Centipede
5. Common Bermuda
6. Buffalograss (requires the least)

During the driest period of summer, our lawns usually require about 1 inch of water every 5 to 6 days. Most hose sprinklers apply ¼ to 1/3 inch of water per hour, so they would need to run approximately 4 hours in one spot. If water runs off the lawn before 1 inch is applied, turn the sprinkler off, let the water soak in for about an hour, and then continue to water.

The best time to water is early morning so less water is lost to evaporation. The worst time to water is in the evening because the lawn stays wet all night. This encourages disease development. Lawns watered too frequently tend to develop shallow root systems which make them more susceptible to grub damage.

Nitrogen recommendations for Texas warm-season lawns based on management level and grass type (per year).

Management	Low	Mod.	High
	Lb N/ 1,000 sq ft		
Common Bermuda	2	2-3	4-5
Hybrid Bermuda	2	3-4	5-6
Buffalograss	0-1	2	NR
St. Augustine (sun)	2	2-3	3-4
St. Augustine (shade)	1	1-2	NR
Zoysia	1-2	2-3	3-4

NR=not recommended

Fertilizer Plan

The rate of fertilizer application, the frequency of application, the ratio of nutrients in the fertilizer and the source of nitrogen all have a great deal to do with how fast the lawn grows.

Before fertilizing your lawn, a soil test is recommended. The soil test report sheet gives you all the information you need to buy the right fertilizer, the amount to use and dates to apply it. If you have any questions, please call your local County Extension Agent.

Without a soil test, the following fertility plan is designed to allow the lawn to grow at a moderate rate and still have good color:

Fertilizer rate	Fertilizer analysis	Application rate: lbs/1,000 sq ft
3-1-2	15-5-10	7
	21-8-16	5
4-1-2	16-4-8	6
	20-5-10	5

For slow, even growth, use a slow-release fertilizer containing either sulfur-coated urea or ureaformaldehyde as a nitrogen source.

Management Level	Timing and number of nitrogen applications
Low	Apply nitrogen during the spring and/or late growing season. This program works where 1 or 2 applications are adequate
Moderate	In addition to the low-level program applications, make 1 additional supplemental summer application
High	In addition to the low-level program applications, make 2 to 3 supplemental summer applications to enhance quality