

MOWING

Mow it High and Let it Lie

Mowing is the most common cultural practice used on lawns around the world. In fact the ability to tolerate mowing is one of the criteria that separate turfgrasses from the rest of the grass species. There are many misconceptions about mowing that can lead to a less than perfect lawn and many homeowners are making lawn care way to difficult by using the wrong mowing practices.



Mowing Basics

Mowing is always a stress on the grass plants. Just because they can tolerate the act of mowing does not mean they like it. Try and reduce the stress on the plant by mowing early in the morning or even better in the evening. Mowing during the heat of the day can cause the plant to go into shock. Mow when the grass is dry. Your mower will work better and there is less likelihood that disease will be spread from plant to plant.

Never mow off more than one third of the leaf tissue in one mowing. If you are mowing your grass at 2 inches don't let it grow over 3 inches. A drastic decrease in height can shock the plant. This doesn't mean you can let it grow to 4 inches and mow off 1 inch in the morning and another in the afternoon. The plant will show the signs of this abuse.

Make sure your mower blades are sharp. Dull mower blades will tear the grass instead of cutting it. This often leaves a tan or brown cast to the lawn after mowing. Torn grass blades are more likely to get infected with a fungus than nicely cut grass. Check the turf often after mowing to make sure your equipment is in good condition.

Leave your clippings on the lawn. Clippings are full of nutrients and can actually reduce your need for fertilizers. Grass clippings readily breakdown and will only cause an issue if the quantity is excessive. Mulching mowers are great at making the clippings small enough but even standard discharge mowers will not cause a problem if you are following the one third rule.

Mowing often lays the grass over slightly (this is how the patterns develop) and it is important to mow in a different direction often so the grass does not lie over excessively. Changing the pattern can also reduce wear and compaction by changing the areas that are traveled.

