

just the facts



Grasscycling



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WHAT IS IT?

Grasscycling means simply leaving clippings on your better spring lawn. It is an easy way to recycle nutrient-rich grass back into the soil to fertilize your lawn and save you time, money and effort. No more raking and bagging! The clippings left on your lawn will form organic matter, help hold water and keep the soil aerated. By using a few simple techniques you can have a healthy, easy- to-care-for lawn.

HOW DO YOU GRASSCYCLE?

The key to grasscycling is to cut grass clippings into small pieces and scatter them so they will decompose quickly. You can do this by using one of the following methods:

- modify your existing lawn mower
- use a mulcher-mower
- use a hand push reel mower – newer models are lightweight, and if your lawn is less than 93 square metres in area this is a very practical mower.

QUICK FACTS

57% of GVRD households cut their lawn 5cm or longer.

45% of residential yard trimmings are grass.

10% of the total volume of municipal waste is grass.

One bag of nutrient-rich clippings produces 100 g of nitrogen-rich fertilizer.

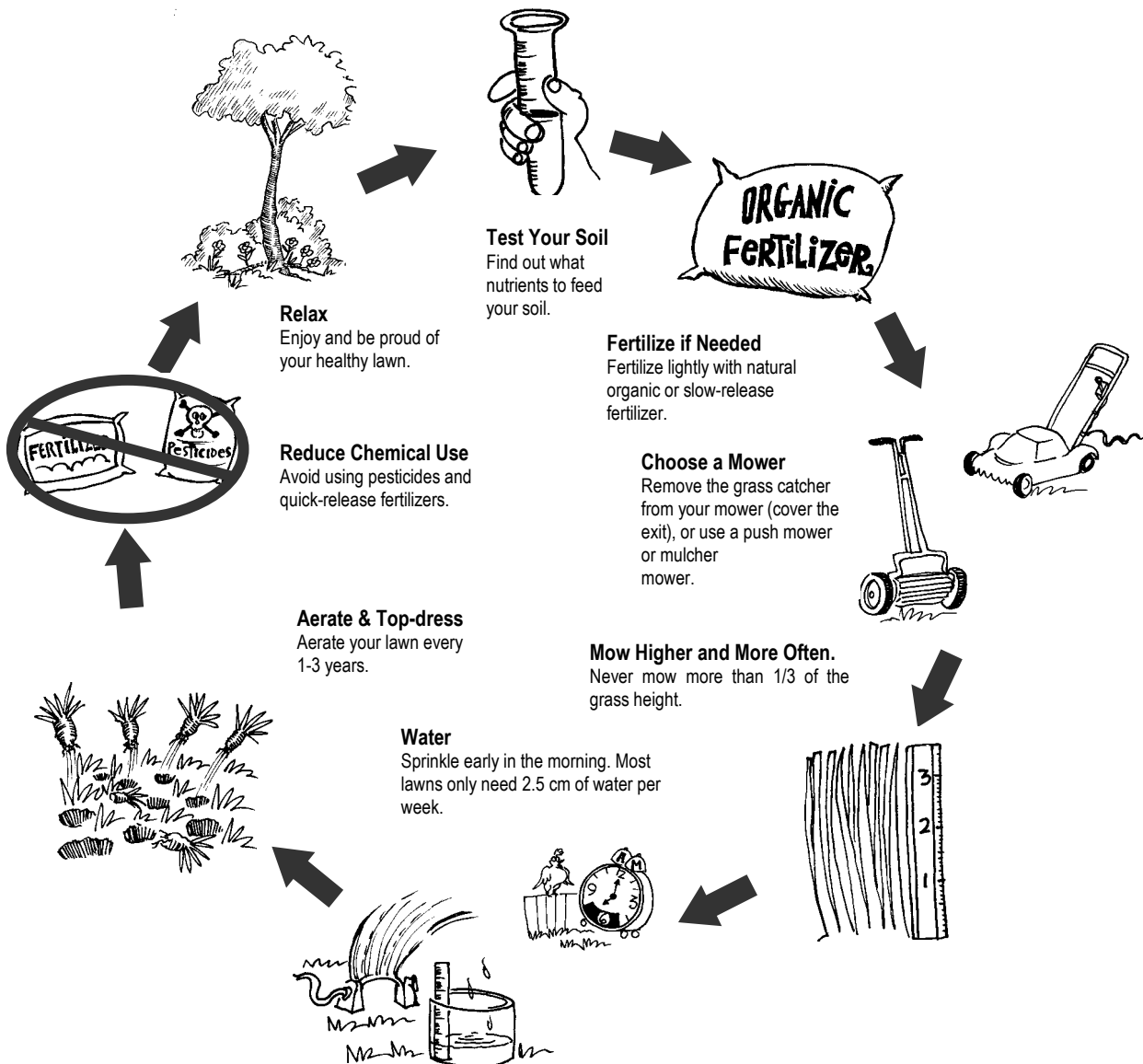
25% more nutrients are added to your lawn by grasscycling.

7 hours of time per season is saved over "bagging and dragging" clippings to the curb.

41% of GVRD residents leave grass clippings on their lawns.

1 hour using a gas-powered 3.5 horsepower mower produces the same amount of air pollution as a car driven 550 kilometres.

30% of all households use electric lawn mowers.



just the facts



WHAT KIND OF MOWER DO YOU NEED?

You don't need to buy a new lawn mower to grasscycle. You can use your old reel or rotary mower by removing the catcher bag. If using a side-discharge mower, mow in a pattern that will re-cut the clippings as you go. On rear discharge mowers, cover the discharge chute to prevent injury from flying rocks.

If you need a new mower, consider buying a hand push mower or mulching mower. Mulching mowers are built to chop grass clippings finely and then blow them down into the turf. The smaller clippings will break down faster. The result is a clean looking lawn with no visible clippings. Mulching mowers can be electric, battery operated, or gas powered. If you are buying a gas mower, remember that four-stroke engines re-cut the grass clippings into mulch better than two-stroke engines. They also emit less air pollution.

Hand push mowers cost less, are quiet and easy to store. They are also non-polluting and provide you with a great form of exercise.

HOW SHOULD YOU MOW YOUR LAWN?

- ◆ Allow your lawn to grow at least 9 cm in height and then cut it back to 6 cm.
- ◆ Remove only one-third of the grass length at each mowing.
- ◆ Cut the lawn when it's dry. Clippings will be distributed uniformly rather than in clumps.
- ◆ Keep your mower blades sharp. Dull blades injure your grass.
- ◆ Cut frequently.
- ◆ Continue mowing until growth stops (early November).
- ◆ Mow more often in the spring.

FERTILIZE NATURALLY

Healthy lawns are a light "meadow" green. Fertilize lightly with a natural organic or slow-release fertilizer. Natural fertilizers will feed your lawn slowly and build soil health.

If you only fertilize once a year, fall is the most important time to fertilize. Fall fertilization allows grass to absorb nitrogen while shoot growth is slower. This promotes "green-up" in the spring.

HOW DO YOU AVOID USING PESTICIDES?

Pesticides damage the soil, pollute water, and may harm people and wildlife. Accept a few weeds. Be selective – hand pull or spot spray weeds. Maintain a dense healthy lawn that will crowd out weeds.

AERATING AND TOP-DRESSING:

- ◆ Improves fertilizer effectiveness
- ◆ removes thatch
- ◆ promotes water drainage through the soil
- ◆ improves air circulation in the root zone
- ◆ mixes layered soil
- ◆ prepares lawn for overseeding.

Aerating is the practice of punching many tiny holes in your lawn. After aerating, top-dress by spreading a thin layer of compost over the area with a rake.

SOIL IS THE FOUNDATION

Soil is the basis for a healthy and water efficient landscape. Test the soil to determine its nutrient requirements. Use a simple kit available at garden centres or phone the Compost Hotline at 604-736-2250.

LAWN WATERING TIPS

- ◆ Use a screwdriver to test soil moisture below the surface. If it slides into the soil easily, the soil is still moist.
- ◆ Observe water sprinkling regulations.
- ◆ Water deeply (but infrequently) to moisten the root zone.
- ◆ Do not overwater as it promotes lawn disease.
- ◆ Water 2.5 cm per week to promote deep roots, then allow soil to dry before watering again.
- ◆ Water early in the morning to reduce water evaporation.
- ◆ Let the lawn go brown and dormant in the summer and enjoy your free time.
- ◆ Avoid walking or playing on dormant lawns.

Fact: Grass clippings do not contribute to thatch accumulation.



**GRASSCYCLING
WILL IMPROVE YOUR LAWN!**

For more information
call the
Compost Hotline
604-736-2250

SOURCES:

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Other *Just the Facts* available:

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