

Every year in New Jersey, dozens of people poison themselves taking care of their own lawns because they don't take product label warnings seriously, and they think that more is better. Lawn additives are powerful chemicals, and you need to use them correctly.

Fertilizer

Too much fertilizer means rapid growth and more mowing. Use soil testing to verify the need for fertilizer; see your County Extension Office for a soil test kit. Fertilize in September and again in October or November for a healthier lawn. This keeps the lawn greener through the winter and strengthens roots for thick growth in the spring without the unwanted long growth caused by spring fertilization. This means fewer mowings, less clippings, and less work. Don't fertilize in summer unless needed; too much can kill cool-season grasses such as fine fescues! Use fertilizer containing at least 50% controlled release nitrogen. The bag may say "water insoluble or WIN", "organic", or "slow release" nitrogen.

When you cut it and leave it, the nitrogen from the grass clippings will add one to two pounds of nitrogen a year to each thousand square feet of lawn. You can adjust the spreader setting to about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of the manufacturer's recommended setting.

Herbicides and insecticides

Herbicides remain on the grass for some time, and some make the clippings unsuitable for mulch, so it's important to cut it and leave it when you use weed killers. Too much herbicide can burn the lawn, kill nearby plants, and contaminate waterways. Instead of repeated whole-lawn application of weed killers, try a one-time pre-emergent weed killer and spot application if your lawn has only a few weeds. If you see signs of insect damage, call your extension agent to determine what you need before you select an insecticide. You may find that you don't need any at all.

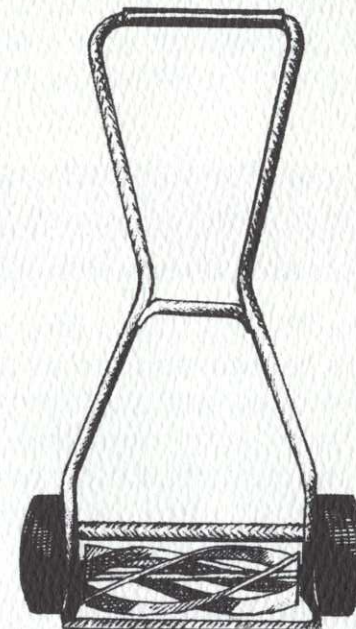
You can achieve the lawn you want and also protect our environment, when you practice careful turf management, and

Cut it and leave it!

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Grass



Cut it and leave it

Environmentally Friendly Lawn Care

New Jersey Department
of Environmental Protection
Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste
Bureau of Recycling and Planning



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