



BACKYARD CONSERVATION

Lawn Care Practices
Promoting Soil Conservation and
Protection of Water Resources



LAWNS AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

Lawns are an integral part of our urban landscape and play a vital role in protecting our soil and water resources.



OUR ROLE

How we care for our lawn determines the degree of the environmental benefits and impacts we achieve.



ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF GRASS

- Improves soil structure
- Reduces stormwater runoff
- Prevents soil erosion
- Captures and filters rainfall
- Replenishes groundwater
- Cleans and purifies the air
- Cools temperatures above the ground



BACKYARD CONSERVATION LAWN CARE PRACTICES

- MOW HIGH
- RECYCLE CLIPPINGS & LEAVES
- CONSERVE WATER
- PROVIDE NUTRITION



BACKYARD
CONSERVATION
LAWN CARE PRACTICES

MOW HIGH

MOWING HEIGHTS

Taller grass is stronger grass. Set your mower at its highest setting (3-4")*

**For bermudagrass, seashore paspalum and zoysia, mow at 2-in. high.*



MYTH:
LOW MOWING
REDUCES
MOWING
FREQUENCY

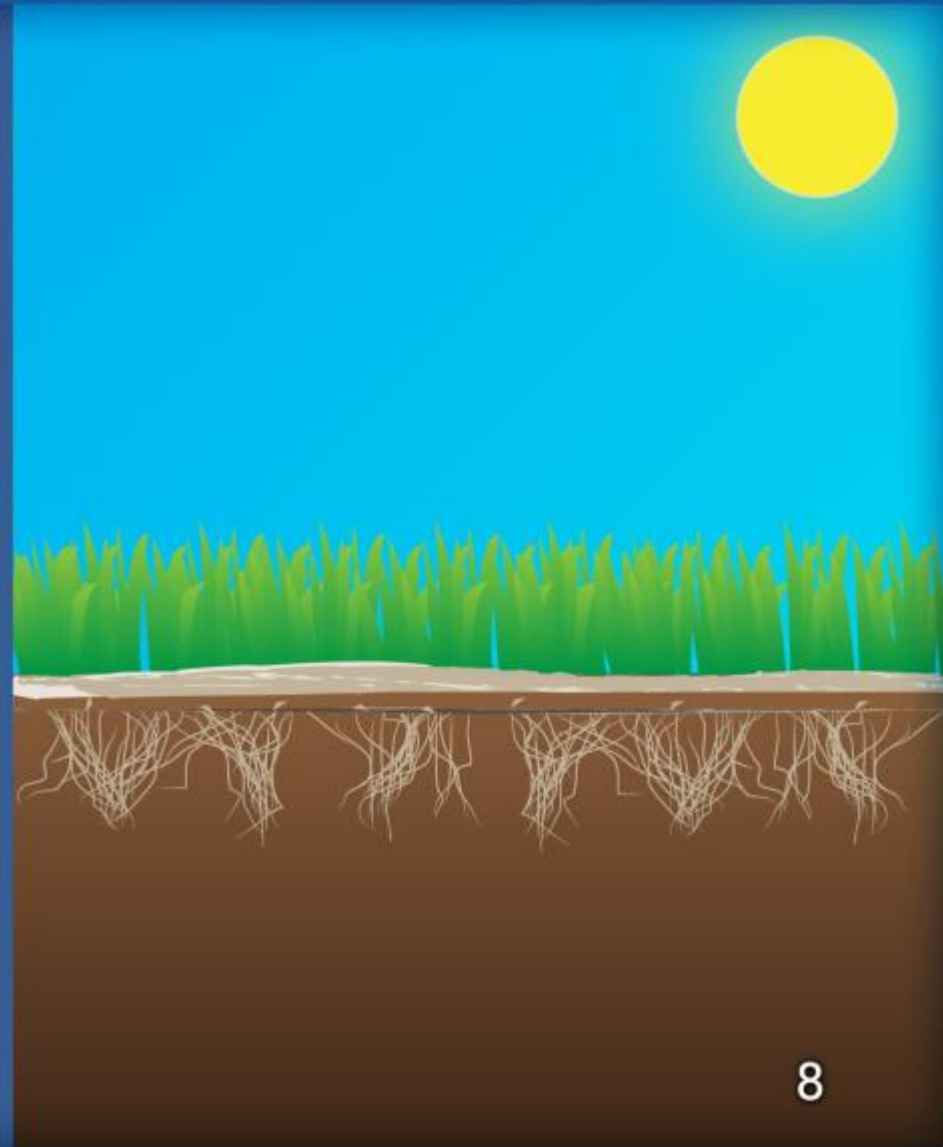
FACT:
IT RESULTS
IN MORE
MOWING



BENEFITS OF LONG VS. SHORT GRASS

Tall grass produces deep roots which better absorb water and control erosion.

Tall grass also blocks weeds and shades the soil surface.



BENEFITS OF LONG VS. SHORT GRASS



Short grass has shallow roots causing the soil to dry out faster and become more susceptible to weeds.



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RECYCLE CLIPPINGS & LEAVES



RECYCLING GRASS CLIPPINGS

Returns nutrients (such as nitrogen, phosphorus,* potassium) and organic matter back to your lawn.

Removing clippings depletes the soil of nutrients.

**Most lawn maintenance fertilizers are phosphorus-free. Recycling phosphorus (returning grass clippings to the lawn) is important.*



SAME BENEFITS FOR LEAF MULCHING

Leaves break down and supply organic matter and nutrients to your lawn.

Mow (1-3 passes) until leaves are chopped up to about a dime size.

Grass mulching and leaf mulching do not contribute to thatch build-up.



OTHER BENEFITS OF RECYCLING CLIPPINGS AND LEAVES

- Improves soil quality
- Saves landfill space
- Saves on the cost to send to a compost facility
- Saves time to rake and bag



CLEAN UP IS KEY TO WATER QUALITY



STORM SEWERS LEAD DIRECTLY TO OUR WATERWAYS!

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CONSERVE WATER

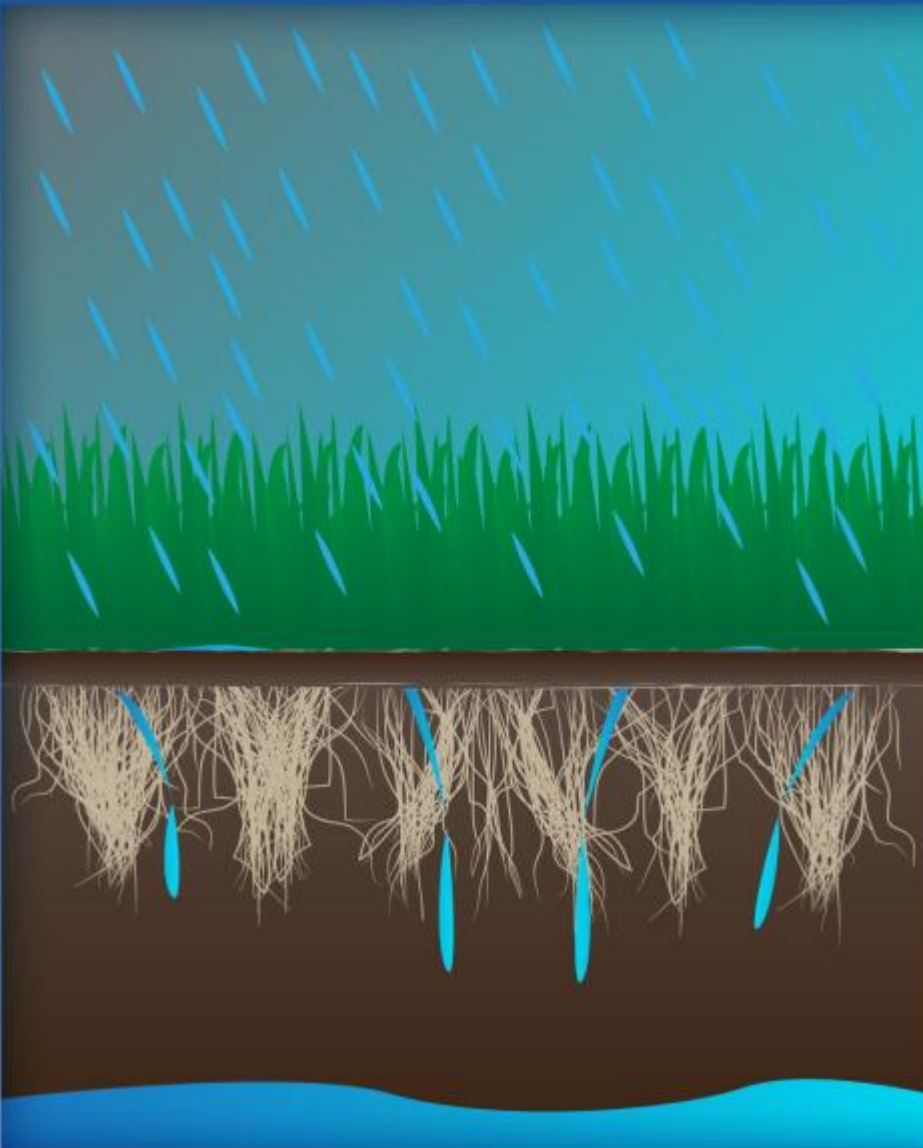


ABSORBING RAIN WHERE IT FALLS

Dense grass and deep roots prevent lateral flow and absorb rainfall.

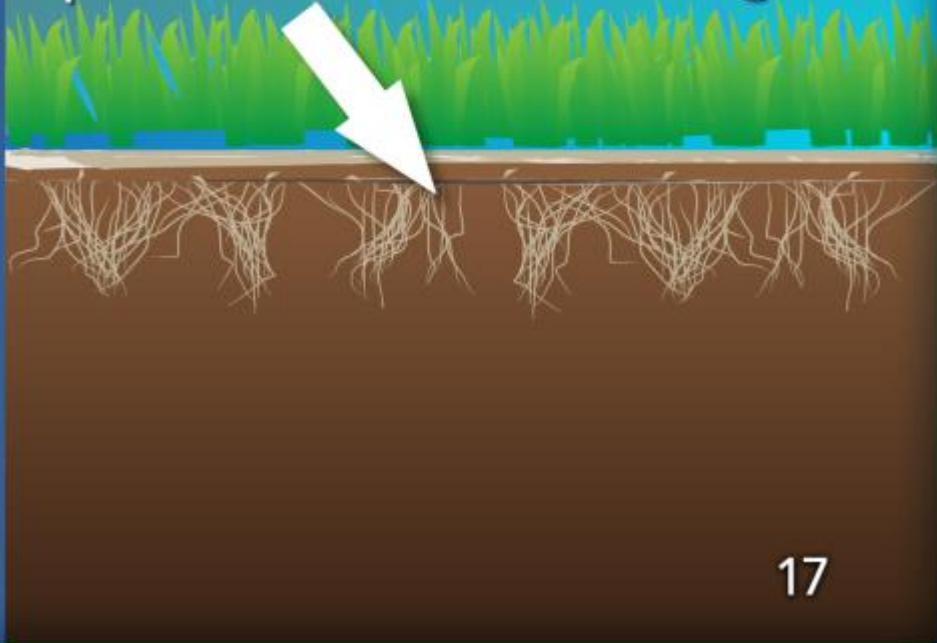


ABSORBING RAIN WHERE IT FALLS



Thin grass promotes runoff and sedimentation.

Shallow roots are unable to filter and retain water and are less able to withstand periods of heat and drought.



MOST YARDS DON'T NEED SUPPLEMENTAL IRRIGATION



GRASS CAN GO DORMANT

- Grass has a survival mechanism – going dormant – when moisture is scarce
- If your lawn turns brown, limit walking on it and don't feed it
- When the rain returns, the lawn should bounce back
- If drought is unusually long in your region, give your grass a deep watering



BEST PRACTICES WHEN WATERING

- Think conservation when considering watering
- Rely on normal rainfall for all or most of your yard watering
- Water in the early morning to limit evaporation
- If you use an irrigation system, use water-saving controllers such as moisture sensors and rain sensors to eliminate unnecessary watering



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PROVIDE NUTRITION



FEEDING YOUR LAWN

Grass, like any plant, needs nutrients to stay healthy.

Sources of nutrients include:

- Grass clippings/mulched leaves
- Compost
- Lawn fertilizer

Generally, only new lawns require phosphorus for root growth. For mature lawns, choose a fertilizer that is phosphorus-free unless a soil test shows a need for this nutrient.

Key Nutrients

Nitrogen (N)

Growth, density and color

Phosphorus (P)

Plant vigor, seedling root and shoot growth

Potassium (K)

Drought tolerance, disease and stress resistance

OPTIMAL TIME TO FEED

The best time to feed your lawn is when the grass is actively growing.



WARM-SEASON GRASS

Grows during warm summer months



COLD-SEASON GRASS

Grows during cool spring and fall months

CLEAN UP

Keep all nutrient sources – grass clippings, leaves, compost and fertilizer – off of hard surfaces, such as driveways, sidewalks and patios.

Sweeping up keeps nutrients from being washed into the sewer systems – which go into our waterways.



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Thanks for helping
improve soil and
water quality through
your lawn care
practices.

**WE NEED
YOUR HELP!**

Tell Your Family,
Friends and Neighbors.



Scotts Miracle-Gro