

# A cutting edge debate on lawns

Lots of people get a special hair cut for the summer. Our lawns need a special cut, too.

*Cut the turf tall.* How tall? Mow it as tall as you can tolerate it. Three to four inches is best. A tall turf naturally develops a deeper, more drought-tolerant root system. Tall grass blades will shade the soil, keeping it cool.


The first lawns that turn yellow in summer are lawns cut too short.

*Let the clippings fall.* Don't collect grass clippings! You may like using grass clippings as a mulch in the garden, but your lawn needs the clippings, too. The clippings will cool the soil of your lawn and conserve moisture. The

clippings will also recycle nutrients back into the soil. It is just like getting a free fertilization every year.

Clippings will not create a thatch problem—they are approximately 90% water. The only time clippings can cause a thatch problem is when the lawn gets badly overgrown and turns fibrous. That's the only good time to collect clippings.

*Keep the blade sharp.* A dull mower blade will shred the tips of the grass, creating wounds. In contrast, a sharp blade will give you a clean cut and minimize damage to the grass blades.

Remember: cut *tall* and let the clippings *fall!* 

## NDSU Extension Service

Written by Tom Kalb,  
Extension Horticulturist, NDSU  
tom.kalb@ndsuh.edu

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