

## Healthy Lawns & Rivers

- ❖ When you mow your yard or rake leaves, don't allow grass clippings or leaves to blow into the street or gutter. Please take a little extra time to clean up paved areas.
- ❖ Grass clippings in the street go down the storm sewers and end up in area lakes and rivers with the potential to cause algae blooms.
- ❖ Mowing into the street is a VIOLATION of City Ordinances and may result in fines.



- ❖ Grass clippings contain phosphorous, the nutrient that turns lakes green with algae.
- ❖ One bushel of fresh grass clippings can contain 0.1 lbs. of phosphorous, enough to produce 30-50 lbs. of algae growth if it finds its way to a lake or river.

## Educational Resources

[www.epa.gov/npdes](http://www.epa.gov/npdes)

[www.deq.state.ne.us](http://www.deq.state.ne.us)

[www.cityofhastings.org](http://www.cityofhastings.org)

[www.nebraskah2o.org](http://www.nebraskah2o.org)

[www.cityofhastings.org](http://www.cityofhastings.org)

*For more information on the City of Hastings Storm Water Management Plan, please contact:*

### City of Hastings

Engineering Department  
220 N. Hastings Avenue  
Hastings, NE 68901



**STORMWATER  
POLLUTION  
PREVENTION**

*Lawns &  
Landscaping*

## Tips to help you “Leave it on the lawn”

- ❖ Regular mowing with a sharp blade set at the proper height keeps grass growing vigorously so it covers the soil surface.
- ❖ For most lawns, a grass height of two to three inches provides good quality turf. Continually scalping turf weakens grass plants and invites pests and weeds.
- ❖ During the summer, raise the mower blade ½” to help your lawn tolerate stress. Taller grass screens light from the soil surface, providing some weed control.
- ❖ When grass has grown very tall, it is better to lower the cutting height gradually, rather than cutting back all at once to avoid unnecessary stress on the plants.
- ❖ Leave grass clippings on your lawn whenever possible. They won’t contribute significantly to thatch build-up. As they decompose, they’re a valuable source of nutrients, especially nitrogen.
- ❖ Yearly nitrogen applications may be reduced up to ½ when grass clippings are returned to the lawn.

**Backyard Compost:** Add clippings to your compost pile, for a nitrogen boost. When composting grass clippings, it is advisable to mix them with other yard wastes such as leaves or wood chips as a bulking agent to increase free air space.

---

*Grass clippings can provide effective mulch around garden plants and between rows of flowers, vegetables, and small fruits. Mulching helps to reduce weeds, conserve moisture, and modify the soil temperature. Take care to avoid mulching too thickly.*

---

**Mulching mowers** and attachments for standard power mowers can reduce clipping size, increasing the rate of decomposition. This can reduce time and save money by eliminating disposal bins and/or trips to the landfill.

## Don’t Bag It – Leaf Management Plan

Leaves are truly a valuable natural resource! They contain 50 to 80 percent of the nutrients a plant extracts from the soil and air during the season. There are four basic ways in which leaves can be managed and used in the landscape:

**Mowing** – Mow light coverings of leaves, leaving the shredded leaves in place on the lawn.

**Mulching** – Mulching reduces evaporation from the soil surface, inhibits weed growth, moderates soil temperatures, keeps soils from eroding and prevents soil compaction.

**Soil Improvement** – Work leaves directly into garden and flowerbeds. A 6-8 inch layer tilled into heavy clay soil will improve aeration and drainage. The same amount tilled into light sandy soil improves water and nutrient holding capacity.

**Composting** – Enriches soils by adding nutrients, loosens heavy soils, helps retain moisture. For more information check out Earth-Kind landscaping at <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/>