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## To Bag or Not To Bag That is the Question?

By Chris Vasecka

Shakespeare could not even answer this question. So let's look at the facts and history. Edwin Beard Budding designed and developed the first mower in 1830. His design was fashioned after a cylindrical shear which was used in cutting carpet. This was the first Reel Type mower which is still used today on golf courses and some homeowners still push them around. The reel mower was a good mower, but had one flaw; you had to mow the grass more often so that the blades of grass would not get pushed over and lay down.



The other drawback was the special sharpening equipment which was needed to maintain the blades sharpness. When mowers were introduced to the United States, companies began developing Rotary blade mowers which are much the same as what most homeowners use today. With a strong engine powering these mowers, you had the option to mow at a much less frequency. This gave people more time to enjoy their yard instead of working on it. The

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problem that was created was the clippings that were left over. Bagging soon became necessary in order to keep a good looking lawn. This practice has been around since the 1930's and is well accepted. What has also followed is the need for more fertilizer and water to keep these same lawns green. When grass clipping are physically removed from the lawn, 10% of the fertilizer and 25% of the water goes with it also. A myth has also developed that by removing the grass clippings decreases the thatch buildup on the lawn, when the opposite is actually true. Grass clipping are 80% water and decompose very rapidly which causes heat and helps to decompose unnecessary thatch matter. Lawns which have undergone years of bagged mowing are typically very heavy in thatch and usually need to have mechanical removal of thatch done yearly. New mulching deck mowers have helped to eliminate clumping of grass, but even in early June and late August the growth still causes clumping. The solution may be to mix it up through out the year. When the growth is slow in spring, mid summer and late fall try to mulch your clippings, and in early June and Late August bag the clippings or continue mulching but mowing

more often later in the day to keep from clumping. Maybe not the answer you were looking for, but again we are just stating the facts. Good Luck.

Oops, I forgot!

Are you one of the countless people who forgot to put down crabgrass preventive? Don't worry, you still have time. Unfortunately if you missed spraying your dandelions, you may be too late. You can still take care of your crabgrass. The cool spring soil temps and temperature have hindered the development of crabgrass. Crabgrass needs soil temps to be 60 degrees or more before it will germinate. Don't hesitate it will warm up. Most stores carry either a spray you can apply or a fertilizer which carries the chemical. Make sure that it is a preventative product. Also the chemical that you use to kill your dandelions is not the same chemical. Good luck killing your weeds.

Saving water is not only cool; it may help to increase your home's \$Budget\$.

Here is where the rubber meets the road. If you irrigate your lawn, your summer watering use will become 70% of your total water use

for the year. This is the area where you can create a financial impact. If you are currently watering with hose and sprinkler you could be over watering by as much as 60%. You may want to consider installing an irrigation system. This will give you better control over your lawn watering needs. If you have an underground sprinkler system you could still be over watering by as much as 40%. The only way you can recapture that 40% is by having an audit done on your property and irrigation system. Use Your Water Right provides this service at a very reasonable rate. Use Your Water Right will provide a professional thorough onsite evaluation of your soil, grass, shade quality and water output of your irrigation system. This information is inputted into our web based water time calculator at [www.useyourwaterright.com](http://www.useyourwaterright.com). New info will be provided on how to set the irrigation clock and how to adjust through out the year. This audit can save you that 40% and put up to \$300.00 back in your wallet each year, while saving thousands of gallons of water. Go green by saving blue, can mean more than just being environmentally conscience but saving money in the process.

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