

## Other Alternatives

If you are unable to leave clippings on the lawn because of long periods of rain, or grass that has grown too high, use one of the following options to keep grass out of Saint Peter's storm sewers:

**Mulch:** Grass clippings can provide an 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. However, care should be taken to avoid mulching too thickly. Excessive mulch can inhibit moisture and oxygen penetration into the soil, and may produce offensive odors.

**Backyard compost:** Add clippings to your compost pile, they are an excellent source of nitrogen. 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. Otherwise, the grass clippings may compact and restrict air flow.

For more information on how to start a compost pile, see the University of Minnesota Extension Service Publication, "Composting and Mulching: A Guide to Managing Organic Yard Wastes." This publication can also be viewed at [www.extension.umn.edu](http://www.extension.umn.edu)



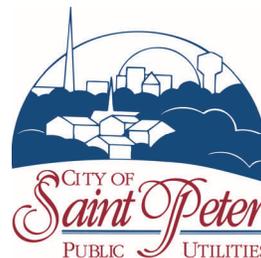
Large impervious surface common in communities like Saint Peter

The Department of Public Works is responsible for maintaining a yard waste drop-off site for the residents of the City of Saint Peter. The site is located at the corner of Swift Street and Saint Julien Street with access from Swift Street beside the National Guard Armory.

Residents may drop-off brush or tree trimmings, grass clippings, and garden waste. Brush and tree trimmings must be cut shorter than six feet. Residents can pick-up wood chips and compost at no charge based on availability.

In addition, areas are marked for soft yard waste and brush drop-off. Access to the site is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. No processed lumber will be accepted at the site.

For questions regarding the Composting Site, please contact the Department of Public Works at (507) 934-0670.



City of Saint Peter  
Department of Public Works  
Stormwater Utility  
405 West Saint Julien Street  
Saint Peter, MN 56082-1874  
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# Leave it on the Lawn!



## Tips for Healthy Lawns and Rivers

- When you mow your yard, please do not mow the grass clippings into the street or gutter. Please take a little extra time to clean up property after you mow.
- Grass clippings in the street are being washed down the storm sewers and will end up in area lakes and rivers where they have the potential to cause algae blooms.
- Mowing into the street is a VIOLATION of the City of Saint Peter ordinances. A violation will result in legal action.

## Keep grass clippings off the street and other paved areas

- Grass clippings contain phosphorus, the nutrient that turns lakes green with algae.
- Grass clippings from actively growing lawns have four to five times more phosphorus content than fallen autumn tree leaves.
- One bushel of fresh grass clippings can contain 0.1 lbs of phosphorus—enough to produce 30 to 50 pounds of algae growth if it finds its way to a lake or river.
- When mowing, grass clippings should be directed away from the street, driveways, sidewalks, or other paved areas. Curbside storm sewers can transport grass clippings (along with other street debris and dirt) to nearby lakes, rivers, and wetlands.
- Grass clippings blown on the street, driveways, sidewalks, or other paved areas during mowing should be swept up and returned to the lawn or composted.



## 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 seriously weakens grass plants and incites pests and weeds. Grass clippings can be left on your lawn when it is mowed regularly at the recommended height.
- During the summer, raise the mower blade 1/2 inch to help your lawn tolerate stress. Taller grass screens light from the soil surface, providing some weed control. It limits the establishment of weed seeds—such as crabgrass—that need light to germinate. It also encourages a slightly deeper root system, so roots can gather moisture and nutrients from a larger soil volume. This gives the grass plants a greater degree of stress tolerance. When grass has grown very tall, it’s 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 organic source of nutrients, especially nitrogen. In fact, yearly nitrogen applications may be reduced by 1/3 to 1/2 when grass clippings are returned to the lawn. Mulching mowers and mulching attachments for standard power mowers can reduce clipping size, increasing the rate at which grass clippings decompose. Removing about an inch of grass blade usually produces clippings that decompose fairly quickly.

*Reprinted from: “Recommended Mowing Techniques”  
Minnesota Department of Agriculture*



## Did You Know?

- Grass clippings are 85% water and 5% nitrogen. When left on the lawn, they return water and nutrients to the soil.
- Grass clippings can provide up to 30% of your fertilizer requirements.
- For every eighth of an inch that a lawn mower blade is raised, there is a 30% increase in a grass blade’s surface area—improving the ability to take in water and nutrients.
- Any mower can recycle grass clippings; you don’t need to purchase a special mower. Simply remove the bagging attachment. If you have trouble using your mower without the bagger, contact your dealer for assistance.
- There are “recycling” or “mulching” mowers manufactured for leaving clippings on the lawn. They are specifically designed to grind up the pieces of grass. With a bagging attachment, they can pick up the clippings when they are wet and heavy in the spring. They’re also excellent for shredding and collecting leaves, which you can then add to your compost pile (see “Other Alternatives”).