

## **Mowing and Pruning it Right** Fact Sheet #54

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Mowing your lawn is a chore that not all people relish but it is important for the health of your grass. By knowing the correct grass height and how often the grass should be mowed you can keep the yard looking healthy.  
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/LH028> Mowing Your Florida yard.

Grass can be a high maintenance plant. So put the right plant in the right place. Try to select a site for the grass that has full sun, and well drained soil. Grass growing under heavy shade can be difficult to maintain. If mowing is getting old or is more maintenance than you want; think about reducing the amount of turf and replacing it with mulched beds and low maintenance groundcovers or plants. For great information on ground covers and Florida friendly plants go [www.floridayards.org](http://www.floridayards.org)

Mow lawns high to encourage a deeper, more drought and pest-tolerant root system.

Removing 1/3 of the blade height is optimal. If you remove more than this (known as scalping) you can stress the grass, leaving it susceptible to disease.

Set your mower at the highest setting during the whole mowing season.

If you fertilize and water conservatively your grass will not grow as quickly and you will spend less time behind the mower.

Keep your mower blades sharp. A clean mowing cut seals quickly and prevents disease from taking hold in the plant.

Try not mow when the grass is drought stress or having pest or disease problems.

Do not mow wet grass. You will not get a clean blade cut and it can be dangerous.

<b>Turfgrass Species</b>	<b>Optimal Mowing Height (inches)</b>	<b>Mowing Frequency (days)</b>	<b>Preferred Mower Type</b>
Bahiagrass	3.0 - 4.0	7 - 17	Rotary/ flail
Bermudagrass	0.5 - 1.5	3 - 5	Reel
Centipedegrass	1.5 - 2.0	10 - 14	Rotary
St. Augustinegrass	2.5 - 4.0*	5 - 14	Rotary
Zoysiagrass	1.0 - 3.0	10 - 14	Reel

\* Dwarf varieties of St. Augustinegrass (Seville, Jade, Palmetto, Delmar) are the only cultivars of this species that should be mowed at less than 3".

Pruning is done to maintain plants to a certain height in the landscape. For close to the home and under window, select plants that are naturally low or slow growing. That way you will have to prune less. Only remove 1/3 of the plant mass at any given pruning. Pruning more than this will stress the plant.

Prune your spring blooming plants like azalea, hydrangea, camellia, Japanese magnolia and spirea soon after they finish flowering

Evergreen shrubs can be pruned anytime during the growing season of March to October. If you prune them

during the winter a new flush of leaves could be burned by a frost.

Crape myrtles bloom on new growth so you can prune them in January or February.

Perennials or tender plants that have been burned by cold temperatures can be pruned when they begin to regrow in the spring.

Reduce yard waste by selecting plants that won't require frequent pruning  
Help stop the spread of invasive plants by removing them from your yard.