

# Mulching while mowing can save your department or your customer big bucks

**ROCKVILLE CENTRE, N.Y.**—For every half-acre you mow with a mulching mower, you can save \$693 in clipping disposal fees, according to a study by the Rodale Institute Research Center and Garden Way.

According to Dr. Terry Schettini of Rodale, "homeowners with a half-acre lawn in this area (Kutztown, Pa.) could generate 4.65 tons or 1,390 cu. ft. of clippings, and fill at least 346 36-gallon trash bags." Using an average town or community disposal fee of \$2 per bag, the typical homeowner with a half-acre lawn would pay at least \$693 per year in disposal fees—not to mention the cost of purchasing bags.

Schettini also said returning grass clippings to the test plots "seems to make them look healthier and grow more vigorously."

The study proved that returning grass clippings to the sod could provide the fertilization equivalent to 121 lbs. total nitrogen, 17 lbs. total phosphorus and 101 lbs. total potassium per half-acre.

Results from another study conducted at Cornell University seems to support Dr. Schettini's observation about turf appearance when mowed with a mulching mower.

The Cornell study showed 40 percent more growth when the grass was cut by a mulching mower instead of a rear bagger. The lawn was also healthier and more lush when treated with a slow-release natural organic fertilizer, according to results published by Dr. A. Martin Petrovic and Panayiotis A. Nektarios.

## 'National Lawn Care Month' coming in April

**MARIETTA, Ga.**—April is National Lawn Care Month, when the lawn care season officially begins for the more than 100 million people who spend a billion hours tending our nation's lawns, parks and sports turf areas every year.

"It's fitting that we celebrate our lawns in April, a month of renewal, and a month when we begin to spend more time outdoors," says Ann McClure, executive director of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA).

Every year, Americans tend a national lawn the size of Indiana—about 25 million acres.

Researchers get a feel for how you can save up to \$1,386 per acre in clipping disposal fees, as they conduct a survey on the efficacy of commercial mulching mowers in the field.



## HOT STUFF

### Toma honored nationally—twice

**CHICAGO**—George Toma, recognized as the nation's leading keeper of professional athletic fields, has been honored by the Sports Turf Managers Association and CBS-TV, home of the "All-Madden" football team.

Toma received the Harry C. Gill Memorial Award at the STMA's annual meeting in Indianapolis late last year. He followed that by being honored by John Madden for his work preparing Candlestick Park for the NFC championship game Jan. 17th.

"Toma is admired by sports figures from owners and managers to players and promoters," said Dr. Jim Watson of the Toro Company. "He is often sought out by players who simply want to say 'Thanks for a field that permits outstanding play.'"

The Gill Award is given to a sports turf professional who has made significant contributions to sports turf management and represented the sports turf industry with dedication, enthusiasm and professionalism. The Madden award is given to NFL players and personnel who personify his football philosophy: hard work and a "whatever-it-takes" attitude.

A co-founder of the STMA, Toma has spent more than 40 years in the industry.



**George Toma: dual honors for the veteran turf manager**

### ALCA releases client sensitivity report

**RESTON, Va.**—The Associated Landscape Contractors of America has released its Crystal Ball XIV Report: "Client Sensitivity in the Total Quality Landscape Contracting Company."

The report builds on the past two years' reports on total quality in the industry. This year's study continues to look deeper into the very center of the total quality concept. It further discusses the true test of a company's progress toward total quality by empowering every employee to practice continuous improvement. It explains how each employee becomes an internal client, and how to go about understanding and satisfying the external client, the customer.

Copies of the report may be obtained for \$5 (ALCA members) or \$15 (non-members, plus \$1.50 shipping and handling. Write ALCA at 12200 Sunrise Valley Dr., Suite 150, Reston, VA 22091; phone (703) 620-6363 or fax (703) 620-6365.