

Time for Lawn Maintenance

We've all seen the occasional property that lets its lawn maintenance go to the point where tall weeds and overgrown bushes seem to be the only features on the lot. It makes the property very unattractive, unsightly, and also a potential fire hazard during the dry summer months.

To reduce this risk, lawns should be kept mowed and all yard waste such as dry grass, cut tree limbs and brush should be properly disposed. A well-maintained yard is also an effective crime prevention tool. Lawns that are not being cared for give criminals the impression that the property is unattended and might be an easy target.

Did you know that the Town of Thurmont has municipal codes that pertain to weeds, overgrown lawns, shrubs and hedges? These ordinances are in place to increase the livability, safety, desirability and appearance of all of our neighborhoods.



Please review Thurmont's Town Code, Chapter 84, Property Maintenance, Subsections 84-(30), (31), (32), (40), (41), and (42) which is located under Municipal Codes on the Home Page.

What's the Big Deal About Tall Grass and Weeds?

When the code refers to "Grass & Weeds" it is defined as: grass, weeds, bushes, vines, poison ivy, poison oak, or any other foreign growth. When any of these types of vegetation are allowed to remain tall, there are possible negative consequences. Overgrown yards are not only an eyesore but a community safety issue. This attracts crime and vandalism, eroding community safety and value. Tall grass and weeds also harbor rodents and other vermin that are unsafe and unpleasant in residential communities. Town Code requires that **grass and weeds be kept less than 10 inches in height**.

Examples of Properties in Violation



Examples of Well Maintained Properties



Why is it important to keep vegetation from obstructing sidewalks, driveway and other right of ways?

Overgrown weeds, bushes, trees, grass and vegetation are a fire and safety hazard. Trimming vegetation to improve visibility is one of the most effective ways you can enhance traffic safety in your neighborhood. All shrubs that overhang any street or sidewalk on the property must be maintained. The branches of any tree extending over any public sidewalk, street or other public way should be trimmed so they do not obstruct vision of the travel of motorists and people. Overgrown trees and shrubs endanger us all when they block our view of traffic signals or signs, obscure street lamps and fire hydrants. It is also restricted to plant any bush, hedge, shrub or any other plant to obstruct or limit access to public utility boxes, electric boxes, electric meters, water meters, water meter access covers, telephone boxes and television cable access points.

Examples of Overgrown Vegetation



Is it legal to mow your grass clippings or leaves into the street?

When grass clippings and leaves from lawn care activities are left on sidewalks and streets or blown into the storm drains, it's a real problem. Here's why:

- Grass clippings and leaves can clog storm drains. Clogged drains don't work properly, meaning rainwater can't flow. The result – street flooding that can damage public and private property.
- Lawn clippings and leaves blown inside storm drains will decay, using up oxygen and releasing nutrients. Excess nutrients encourage weed and algae growth in the drainage systems.
- Grass clippings and leaves that are blown into the streets or left on sidewalks are eyesores that make neighborhoods less attractive.
- **Most importantly**, blowing grass clippings and leaves on streets and sidewalks or into gutter of any Town Street is a violation of Town of Thurmont Code, Section 84-31, (4). Those responsible are subject to enforcement action and fine of fifty (\$50.00) dollars.

Do not blow cut grass, weeds and or leaves into the streets or gutters of any Town street.



Remember, blowing grass and leaves onto the streets and sidewalks and into storm drains is against the law and makes our streets and sidewalks less attractive. Do the right thing with leaves and lawn clippings—bag them or recycle them... just don't blow them away.

If you see a yard in your neighborhood with grass or weeds over 10 inches or any violation under lawn maintenance, you may contact me at 301-271-0905 ext. 105 or make a complaint on the web at Thurmont.com, Report a Concern.

These issues need to be resolved as quickly as possible to protect health and safety. Let's all do our part in being good neighbors and keep the Town of Thurmont a cleaner, safer, and healthier place to live.

Thank You

Kristi Wood
Code Enforcement Officer