

Lawns — Environmentally Beneficial

Environmentally friendly lawns. Its really true!

A healthy lawn does more positive things for the environment besides looking good. The positive effects of a healthy lawn and garden are abundant. Healthy, properly maintained turf positively impacts the quality of our lives and the quality of our environment in ways that almost nothing else can. A dense turf area prevents soil erosion, cools and cleans the air, filters surface water and returns it to the water table, cushions falls and prevents injury, reduces noise, adds value to our homes and is pleasing to the eye.

- Turf grass transforms carbon dioxide into oxygen
- Lawns help reduce the heat island effect commonly found in ur urban environments
- Lawns reduce energy consumption through its cooling effects
- Lawns help reduce global warming trends by filtering out many pollutants commonly found in the air.
- Healthy lawns trap an estimated 12 million tons of dust and dirt from the air annually.
- Lawns help reduce soil erosion through deep roots that hold the soil in place during heavy flooding.
- 2,500 square feet of lawn absorbs enough carbon dioxide from the air to release enough oxygen for a family of four to breathe.
- Lawns also help reduce noise in urban areas.

University of Wisconsin-Madison

<http://www.soils.wisc.edu/soils/N-P-Gwater.html>

The public perception that lawns and lawn fertilizers are major contributors of nitrogen and phosphorus to lakes, streams, and groundwater is false. Their contributions are overshadowed by those from agricultural lands.

The notion that banning of phosphate application on home lawns will significantly reduce lake eutrophication is likewise false. With 6 years of data in hand, I examined the relationship between runoff losses of phosphorus and the rates of fertilizer phosphate applied. For all practical purposes, there was no relationship. As long as we maintain green landscapes, there will be a relatively small but fairly consistent release of phosphorus into urban surface water from that vegetation regardless of whether fertilizer is applied or not. Failure to maintain quality turf through fertilization carries the risk of increasing amounts of runoff in urban environments.

The Green Industry is aware of the important position it holds in protecting our environment and is taking steps to develop new and improved varieties of grass that require less fertilizer, less water and are more resistant to diseases and insects. Their goal is to protect America's natural resources.

Major fertilizer producers are reducing amounts of phosphorus in their fertilizer products. Even some university experts believe only a small percentage of runoff originates from consumer lawns as stated in a recent study conducted by Texas A&M University:

“Evaluation of Resource-Efficient Landscape Plants to Reduce Contaminants in Urban Runoff” found that “The concentration of nitrate and orthophosphate in runoff was consistently very low, suggesting that fertilizer usage in residential landscapes poses little water quality risk.”

The Green Industry is taking steps to reduce this even more by developing better products and improved procedures. And did you know that a major lawn fertilizer component (nitrogen) can be made from the waste product created in the manufacture of some plastics?

MISSISSAUGA, Ontario, Canada - Across North America, more than 20 million acres of lawns have sprung back to life, providing a soft landing for kids at play, a blanket for families to picnic and a cushion for bare feet to roam. Yet the greatest benefit of healthy grass - what it means to the environment - is one that is nearly always overlooked. Indeed, turf is about much more than aesthetics. For most urban communities, it's the foundation of the neighborhood's ecosystem. "As a society we tend to take the benefits of grass for granted," says Jim Beard Ph.D., one of the leading turf experts in the United States and the chief scientist at the International Sports Turf Institute. "Because it's around us every day, people don't think about the fact that a healthy turf generates oxygen for improved air quality and controls runoff and erosion. Most homeowners don't realize noise and air pollution are reduced in most suburban areas because the grass ecosystem serves as a natural filter for the environment. The scientific evidence clearly shows that a healthy lawn is good for the environment." Specifically, Beard and other scientists say a healthy lawn **provides the following environmental benefits:**

- Cooling. Lawns have substantial cooling effect via evaporation.
- Clean air: Grass not only creates oxygen but improves the quality of the environment by removing pollutants and other particles from the atmosphere.
- Decomposes organic pollutants: Turf organisms are active in the decomposition of organic waste and hydrocarbons, which leads to soil improvement
- Lessens global warming: Grass can absorb and sequester carbon dioxide greenhouse gases.
- Noise filter: Grass and other ornamentals help absorb sound, potentially reducing noise pollution in some areas by 20-30 percent.

Perhaps the benefits of turf are largely unnoticed since the lawn as we know it today is a relatively new phenomenon. At the turn of the 20th century, lawns - where they existed - were the product of sweepings from haymow and were filled with weeds that were difficult, if not impossible, to control. "It's true that most homeowners are making large investments in their lawns because they take pride in the beauty associated with them," says Dr. Karl Danneberger, a professor of Horticulture and Crop Science at The Ohio State University. "But it's important for homeowners to know that the beauty they're creating actually is helping to support the environment." Turf scientists say one of the best ways to achieve these benefits is to maintain healthy turf, which means feeding it on a regular basis with a fertilizer that contains nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. While some people believe these fertilizers are likely to run off a lawn and cause pollution, the scientists say the opposite is true. "Like human beings, there are vital nutrients that grass needs to be as healthy as possible," says Dr. Beard, who is also professor emeritus at Texas A&M University. "And just like people, if grass is well-fed, it becomes healthier and stronger. Multiple studies have shown that healthy turf acts as a sponge, actually reducing runoff not causing it."

"Homeowners who are confused about which product to buy or how to properly use lawn care products should contact a lawn care professional to take care of their turf needs.

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YOU TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR LAWN



WE TAKE PRIDE IN OUR WORK

While these benefits are certainly desired by most everyone, we're all equally concerned about our environment. Our managers and technicians attend on-going training courses every year to stay abreast of the most recent advancements in lawn care practices and new technology. We're committed to providing the highest quality lawn care available while protecting our environment at the same time. The safety of our clients and our employees is of great importance to us. Please call us if you would like further information regarding our lawn care practices and the products that help your lawn and landscape stay healthy and beautiful.