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Environmental Benefits of Turfgrass

EROSION CONTROL

“Turfgrass is the best defense against soil erosion”

- Source: Maryland Turfgrass Survey – 1996 - An Economic Value Study

Soil erosion is one of the most pressing environmental problems facing the U.S. today. Nearly 6 billion tons of soil wash or blow away each year, a figure exceeding the amount of erosion experienced during the devastating "Dust Bowl" years of the 1930's. Soil erosion costs between \$6 and \$16 billion a year.

Turfgrass is the best defense against soil erosion. Grass binds the soil more effectively than any other plant. The reason is that each grass plant has an extensive root system. Up to 90% of the weight of a grass plant is in its roots. A single grass plant grown under ideal conditions has over 300 miles of roots.

Healthy turf areas absorb rainfall 6 times more effectively than a wheat field and 4 times better than a hay field. A thick healthy lawn reduces runoff to next to nothing. No wonder newly excavated earth is so quickly replanted in turfgrass.

NOTE: Survey data was collected by the Maryland Agricultural Statistics Service which also tabulated the results and wrote the findings. This work was done under the direction of M. Bruce West, State Statistician. In addition, experts from the University of Maryland and private sectors provided valuable data and expertise needed to assess the scope and impact of the turf industry in the state. Survey results can be viewed at <http://iaa.umd.edu/umturf/MTC%20Survey/MTC%20PRIMARY%20PAGE>

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