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Environmental Benefits of Turfgrass

NATURAL FERTILIZER & SOIL IMPROVEMENT

“Grass is the most effective plant available for reconditioning the soil.”

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

Your own lawn is the most natural and economical fertilizer available on the market today. Consider that every individual plant of Kentucky bluegrass produces about 3 feet of growth a year. The average lawn produces about 233 pounds of clippings every year for every 1,000 square feet of turf area. Leaving these clippings on the lawn and allowing them to decay and decompose in place is the equivalent of three applications of lawn fertilizer.

This process also builds up humus, keeps soils microbiologically active and, over time, improves soils physically and chemically. Grass is the most effective plant available for reconditioning the soil. An extremely important function of turfgrasses is soil improvement through organic matter additions derived from the turnover of roots and other plant tissues that are synthesized in part from atmospheric CO₂ via photosynthesis. A high proportion of the world's most fertile soils have been developed under a vegetative cover of grass (Gould, 1968*)

Gould, F.W. 1968. Grass Systematics. McGraw-Hill, New York.

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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