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Synthetic Turf Council

Synthetic Grass 360°

A Guide for Today's Landscape & Recreation Solutions

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Why Synthetic Grass?

Synthetic Grass: Creating lush, eco-friendly and cost-effective landscapes

There are many reasons why synthetic grass has become so popular. A heightened sense of environmental awareness prompts interest in its ability to conserve billions of gallons of water each year. It replicates the look of natural, lush grass without the need for resource-intensive maintenance. Thousands of homeowners, businesses, municipalities and government entities nationwide use synthetic grass as an attractive landscape solution that saves time, money and water.

If you think synthetic grass is just for sports fields, it's time to expand your horizons. Today's landscape and recreation options include numerous innovations formulated specifically for use with lawns, areas where children and pets play, public spaces and much more. The Synthetic Turf Council's quality guidelines help assure an attractive appearance over many years for synthetic grass landscape, particularly in residential communities, business areas and places where curb appeal is essential.

The Synthetic Turf Council (STC) created this guide to showcase the numerous uses and benefits of synthetic grass. It features information about the widespread adoption of synthetic grass in places like parks and playgrounds, private homes and residential areas, businesses ranging from high-end hotels to corporate headquarters and highway medians to golf courses.

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If you would like to learn more and see photos of the many ways that synthetic grass is being used as a landscape solution, we invite you to visit www.syntheticturfcouncil.org. Thanks for your interest in synthetic grass!

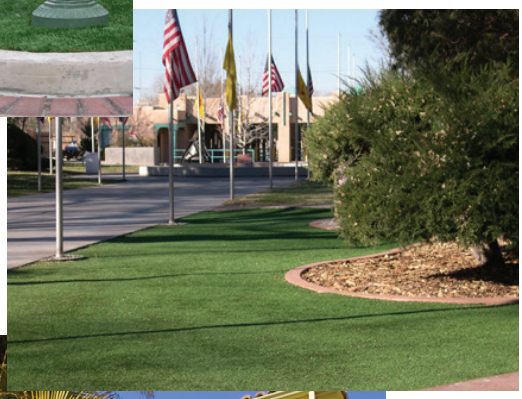
For Landscape & Recreation Use

Provides Numerous Benefits

Though there is some synthetic grass being sold in the U.S. of uncertain quality, particularly some imports from China, most of today's synthetic grass:

- Is engineered, tested, and warranted to be a beautiful, cost-effective and eco-friendly landscape solution for many residential and commercial uses
- Comes in many styles so as to replicate all of the common landscape grasses
- Is protected against fading and deterioration from the sun's rays to maintain its natural appearance and durability for many years
- Saves water, money, and time, and eliminates the use of toxic pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers
- Can return the initial investment in two to four years, depending on the region of the country

Remember: Low price usually means low quality and durability. Make sure the synthetic grass you ordered is the same synthetic grass that is installed – keep the sample and compare it before installation to the product that is delivered.



Landscape and Recreation

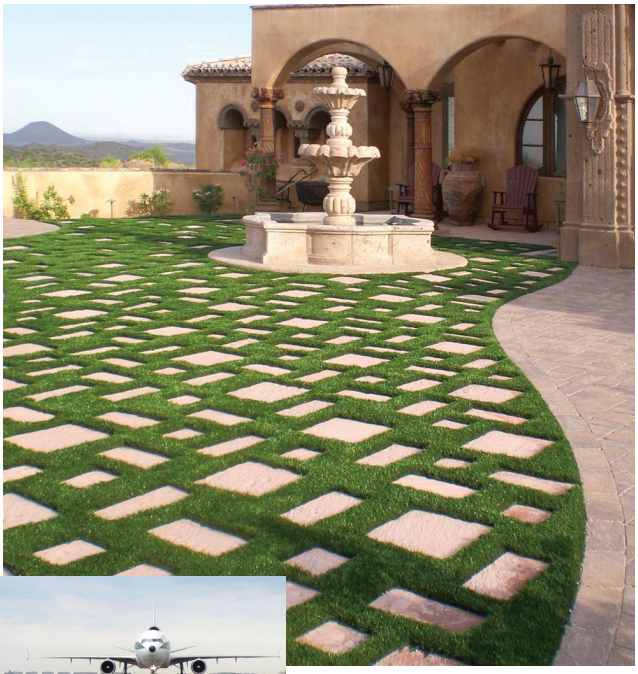
Delivers versatile applications

Beautifully landscaped synthetic grass can often be installed in places where living grass can't grow or be effectively maintained.

Applications include:

- Airport grounds
- Businesses/commercial developments
- Golf courses
- Highway medians
- Homes/residential communities
- Municipalities
- Parklands
- Pet parks
- Playgrounds
- Rooftops
- Tennis courts
- Closure of landfills

Running, playing fetch and jumping by even one large dog can take its toll on grass. Just ask the Central Park Dog Park in Fremont, Calif., a 40,000 square foot dog park that is the largest of its kind in the country. When other parks are closing down during the winter months for maintenance, or sending dogs back to their cars covered in dirt and mud, the synthetic grass at Central Park Dog Park allows it to remain open and mud-free, regardless of the weather.



Closed Landfill

Eco-friendly solution

From Disneyland and the Wynn Hotel to the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base and your neighbor's yard, thousands of homes, businesses, golf courses, and public spaces have turned to synthetic grass to provide a lush, attractive landscape solution that requires minimal resources and maintenance.

Water conservation is a necessity. In March 2011, Wharton published a report about the growing scarcity of water. It references a prediction by the 2030 Water Resources Group that by 2030 global water requirements will be "a full 40% above the current accessible, reliable supply." Further, less than 3% of all available water is fresh and drinkable. Underground aquifers hold almost all the potable water available in liquid form, and their rate of depletion more than doubled between 1960 and 2000.[1] Yet, the EPA states that nationwide landscape irrigation is estimated to account for almost one-third of all residential water use, totaling more than 7 billion gallons per day.[2]

Synthetic grass promotes greater utilization of land, as you can do more with the same space surfaced with synthetic turf than with natural grass. Rooftops once deemed unusable for high-rises and residential buildings can now feature inviting green areas. Hotels that had to restrict the use of the lawns for parties and events can now schedule as many functions as they can book.

The Southern Nevada Water Authority estimates that every square foot of natural grass replaced saves 55 gallons of water per year.[3] If an average lawn is 1,800 square feet, then Las Vegas homeowners with synthetic grass could save 99,000 gallons of water each year or about $400 annually. In Atlanta, homeowners could save $715 a year, not including much higher sewer charges.

Recognizing its ability to conserve water, the Simi Valley City Council adopted an ordinance in March 2012 allowing single-family homeowners to cover their front yards almost entirely with synthetic grass.

In its report, "Municipal Solid Waste in the United States, 2009 Facts and Figures", the EPA estimates that 33.2 million tons of yard trimmings were generated in 2009, the third largest component of Municipal Solid Waste in landfills.[4] As yard trimmings decompose, they generate methane gas, an explosive greenhouse gas, and acidic leachate.[5]

A June 2008 National Public Radio report called "Water-Thirsty Golf Courses Need to Go Green" reported "Audubon International estimates that the average American golf course uses 312,000 gallons of water per day. In a place like Palm Springs, where 57 golf courses challenge the desert, each course eats up a million gallons a day. That is, each course each day in Palm Springs consumes as much water as an American family of four uses in four years."[6]

Synthetic turf is usually permeable, but impermeable synthetic grass is also being used when specified and as an economical and environmentally effective solution for the closure of landfills, mine spoils, and hazardous sites.

> *"The inclusion of synthetic grass in our landscape has proven to be a smart choice for the resort and mother earth. Since the conversion, we are able to accommodate increased capacity and utilize a greater percentage of grassy areas, while providing an enhanced event experience, without damaging the grass. This year, there will be eight million gallons of water conserved and our new synthetic lawn allows us to eliminate the use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides on ground in close proximity to the beach."*
>
> ~ Rodrigo A. Carrillo, Project Manager, Fontainebleau Hotel, Miami Beach, FL

[1] "Valuing Water: How Can Businesses Manage the Coming Scarcity?" (Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, March 2011)
[2] Outdoor Water Use in the United States, (EPA-832-F-06-005, August 2008)
[3] Water Smart Landscapes Rebate (Southern Nevada Water Authority website)
[4] "Municipal Solid Waste in the United States, 2009 Facts and Figures," (EPA Office of Solid Waste, EPA530-R-10-012, December 2010)
[5] Frequent Questions about Yard Trimmings, (EPA website, December 2010)
[6] Frank Deford, "Water-Thirsty Golf Courses Need to Go Green," (National Public Radio, June 11, 2008)

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Saves money and time

A growing number of tax credits and rebates are available since synthetic grass conserves water. For example, the Central Basin Municipal Water District in California reports that Golden State Water Company customers replacing their irrigated areas with synthetic turf can save $1.00 per sq. foot up to a $1,000 rebate.

Many public spaces, from government grounds and highway medians to airport entrances, are turning to synthetic grass for appealing, water-saving landscape solutions that reduce operating and maintenance expenditures.

Synthetic grass is often used in common areas by Home Owner Associations to reduce maintenance costs, save water and eliminate the use of toxic pesticides and fertilizers. Aesthetically appealing, its uniform appearance helps maintain curb appeal in compliance with association standards.

According to *American Green: The Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Lawn*, the average homeowner will spend 150 hours a year maintaining his lawn.[7] Synthetic grass helps busy people gain more leisure time by eliminating tiresome chores such as mowing, weeding and watering.

[7] Ted Steinberg, "American Green: The Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Lawn," 2006

Rooftop Garden

Promotes greater accessibility

Play areas are among the public spaces covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The 2010 Standards for Accessible Design (Sections 240, 1008) addresses play areas designed, constructed, and altered for children ages two and over in a variety of settings, including parks, schools, childcare facilities, shopping centers, and public gathering areas. Synthetic grass systems are able to meet these new accessibility standards.

Making recreation for the disabled as inclusive as possible is a growing priority. "Inclusive recreation is one of the fastest growing needs in more and more parks and recreation agencies across the United States," said Elizabeth Kessler, 2009-2010 National Recreation and Park Association president, during the 11th annual National Institute on Recreation Inclusion conference in November 2010.

Synthetic grass creates more recreation opportunities for people with disabilities and physical challenges. Wheelchairs roll easily and crutches won't sink into park and landscape surfaces, like those used by the Miracle Leagues nationwide to help youth with physical disabilities play baseball.

Many retirement communities use extensive amounts of synthetic grass for landscaping to assist residents with mobility challenges. People using wheelchairs, canes or walkers can easily move across the turf. Because they are easy to maintain, synthetic turf surfaces also offer seniors the beauty of a decorative lawn without the expense, labor, and time of weekly yard work during much of the year.

Synthetic grass innovations are making golf accessible for more people. In 2010, the Golf Learning Center at Visitacion Valley Middle School in San Francisco opened a 12,000 square foot installation that was the first of its kind nationwide. The Learning Center was purposely built in one of San Francisco's most under-served communities to help bring golf to inner city youth as part of the First Tee Program of San Francisco.

"We have some fabulous facilities -- but this synthetic grass sets our Taylor's Dream Boundless Playground apart from all the others! Not only beautiful, it also gives children and adults with disabilities the chance to play with their peers. I believe this type of surfacing will become a standard for many playgrounds in the future."

~ Sarah Nichter of the Fort Wayne Parks & Recreation Department, Fort Wayne, IN

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Enhances safety and security

Local communities need accessible, versatile play surfaces for its youth and people of all ages. Parks and playgrounds that use synthetic grass allow kids to be active year-round on safe and resilient sports surfaces.

With synthetic grass, kids and parents don't have to worry about mildew and bacteria from wet mulch, allergies associated with natural grasses or other potential health irritants.

Owners of second homes that landscape with synthetic grass don't need a lawn maintenance crew that may be tempted by a vacant home.

"In 2009 the City of Lakeland opened Common Ground, our first inclusive playground featuring unique play experiences for children of varying physical and cognitive abilities. We utilized synthetic turf to cover over 25,000 square feet of play zones to connect our barrier free play elements. The surface creates the natural looking green environment so critical to our design, provides barrier free safety fall zones that protect our children, drains almost instantly even after a tropical torrential rain and it remains cooler than other safety surface options. Maximizing our children's outdoor play time, Common Ground is a community dream come true."

~ Pam Page, Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation, City of Lakeland Parks & Recreation Department, Lakeland, FL

Transforms Lifestyles and Community Wellness

By making continuous and safe play possible, synthetic grass promotes a healthy lifestyle, which enhances community well-being. It also helps increase childhood fitness, an important objective of the "Let's Move!" program championed by First Lady Michelle Obama, and the NFL's "Play 60" campaign.

In reporting that about 17% of children and adolescents are obese, the Centers for Disease Control notes that the lack of safe, appealing places for kids to play or be active is a major problem in many communities.[10] Determined to reverse this trend, a growing number of parks and playgrounds are installing synthetic grass to help youth be active year-round.

Synthetic grass creates low-maintenance, pet-friendly lawns and parks that keep man's best friend safe and healthy while controlling odors.

Golf enthusiasts are installing synthetic grass greens in their backyards to increase practice time without leaving the comfort of home. STC members report that while most homes will buy a 1,000 to 1,500 square foot putting green, they are now installing an increasing number of full-blown par3's with proper tee boxes, representing how serious golfers will customize their ultimate practice experience in the future.

Synthetic turf can come in many colors, like the orange, blue and yellow grass at the Sunflower Preschool Playground at Barnett Family Park in Lakeland, Florida.

[10] Fact Sheet, A Growing Problem: Childhood Overweight and Obesity (CDC website)

Synthetic grass has created an attractive, accessible, environmentally-friendly landscape and recreation solution. Ready to transform the way you play outside, enhance home values or improve private or public landscaping options? Visit our Online Buyers Guide and Member Directory to learn the names of STC member companies that can help you get started now! www.syntheticturfcouncil.org.

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