SYNTHETIC TURF COUNCIL

SYNTHETIC GRASS 360°
A Guide for Today’s Landscape and Recreation Solutions
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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 has prompted 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.

The increase in need for water conservation and reduction of harmful runoff and emissions from lawn maintenance has driven the demand for environmentally friendly alternatives for landscaping and recreational areas. In today’s synthetic grass industry, continuous innovations have taken the look, feel, and function of synthetic grass to a new level. Homeowners, commercial properties, playgrounds and much more are benefiting greatly with synthetic grass.

The number of synthetic grass options and applications are growing and the Synthetic Turf Council (STC) has 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 such as parks, playgrounds, private homes and commercial areas. Businesses ranging from high-end hotels to corporate headquarters and highway medians to golf courses are just a few examples of growing segments.

If you would like to learn more about 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!
Landscape and Recreation

Benefits of Synthetic Grass

There are many benefits of using synthetic grass and with today’s innovation and technology; improvements are being made in durability, looks and functionality year after year.

Today’s Synthetic Grass:

- Engineered, tested, and warranted to be a beautiful, cost-effective and eco-friendly landscape solution for many residential and commercial uses
- Comes in many different styles so as to replicate all of the common landscape/recreational grasses
- 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: Make sure you buy synthetic grass from a trusted source and ensure that the grass is made of high quality materials. Most, if not all, manufacturers and wholesalers can provide testing data on durability, UV protection and other various testing methods done to show that their turf is of good quality.
Applications of Synthetic Grass

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
- Bocce courts
- Closure of landfills

The synthetic grass industry is growing both domestically and internationally. When it comes to playgrounds and inclusive play applications, we have seen a large increase in demand. Synthetic grass allows children safe, year-round access without the worry of mud, allergens, biting insects and more. This allows communities to engage more in the well-being of our future generations while providing a clean, low-maintenance area to play on.

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]

The average American family uses 320 gallons of water per day, about 30 percent of which is devoted to outdoor uses. More than half of that outdoor water is used for watering lawns and gardens. Nationwide, landscape irrigation is estimated to account for nearly one-third of all residential water use, totaling nearly 9 billion gallons per day.[2]
The Southern Nevada Water Authority estimates that every square foot of natural grass replaced saves 55 gallons of water per year. 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 expanded an ordinance in 2015 allowing single-family homeowners to cover 100% of their yards with synthetic grass.

In its report, “Advancing Sustainable Materials Management: 2015 Fact Sheet”, the EPA estimates that 34.7 million tons of yard trimmings were generated in 2015, the third largest component of Municipal Solid Waste in landfills. As yard trimmings decompose, they generate methane gas, an explosive greenhouse gas, and acidic leachate.

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 use of synthetic grass eliminates:

- Emissions from mowers and trimmers
- Harmful fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides
- Resource depleting watering
- Unnecessary yard trimmings waste

**Saves money and time**

Many public spaces, including shipping centers, hotels, car dealerships and restaurants, are turning to synthetic grass for appealing, water-saving landscape solutions that reduce operating and maintenance expenditures.

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.

According to American Green: The Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Lawn, the average homeowner will spend 150 hours a year maintaining his lawn. Synthetic grass helps busy people gain more leisure time by eliminating tiresome chores such as mowing, weeding and watering.
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. Residents living within these communities look to synthetic grass as a way to beautify their yards.

**Promotes greater accessibility**

Play areas are among the public spaces covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Standards for Accessible Design 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 accessibility standards.

Making recreation for the disabled as inclusive as possible is a growing priority for the industry. “Inclusive recreation is one of the fastest growing needs in more and more parks and recreation agencies across the United States,” noted former National Recreation and Park Association president, Elizabeth Fessler, during a National Institute on Recreation Inclusion conference.

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 nationwide organizations that 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. It is not unusual to find synthetic grass putting greens in people’s backyards as well as HOAs, private and retirement communities. However, the use of synthetic grass has opened other opportunities. Some communities have installed areas which help encourage interest in golf at an early age. These installations are helping to bring golf to inner-city youth as part of programs such as First Tee.

“We have some fabulous facilities — but this synthetic grass sets our 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.”

— Municipal Parks and Recreation Department Representative

Enhances safety and security

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

“Our city opened an 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.”

— Assistant Director of a Municipal Parks & Recreation Department
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 advocated by several national campaigns.

In reporting on the rise in obesity among children and adolescents, 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. 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 par 3’s with proper tee boxes, representing how serious golfers will customize their ultimate practice experience in the future.

Synthetic grass comes in a variety of colors and is 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 and certified companies that can help you get started now!

https://www.syntheticturfcouncil.org

https://stc.onlinemarketbase.org/
Verify a STC Certified Turf Installer-Landscape (CTI-L)

The STC Certified Turf Installer-Landscape (CTI-L) Program promotes industry-recognized best practices for landscape synthetic turf installation.

Browse the STC website for STC Certified Turf Installers-Landscape individuals who meet the certification eligibility criteria, achieved the course requirements and pledge to abide by the STC Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct.

https://www.syntheticturfcouncil.org/search/custom.asp?id=5150

About the Synthetic Turf Council (STC)

The STC is the world’s largest organization representing the synthetic turf industry. Founded in 2003, the STC assists buyers and end users with the selection, use and maintenance of synthetic turf systems in sports field, golf, municipal parks, airports, landscape and residential applications. It is a resource for current, credible, and independent research on the safety and environmental impact of synthetic turf, as well as technical guidance on the selection, installation, maintenance, and environmentally responsible disposal of synthetic turf. Membership includes builders, landscape architects, testing labs, maintenance providers, manufacturers, suppliers, installation contractors, infill material suppliers and other specialty service companies. For more information, visit http://www.syntheticturfcouncil.org.

To find STC member and certified companies that provide landscape and recreation synthetic grass products and services, please visit the STC Online Buyers’ Guide & Member Directory at https://stc.onlinemarketbase.org.
Related Guidelines and Resources

(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, January 2017)

(3) Water Smart Landscapes Rebate
(Southern Nevada Water Authority website)

(4) Advancing Sustainable Materials Management: 2015 Fact Sheet
(EPA Office of Land and Emergency Management,
EPA530-F-18-001, July 2018)

(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)


(8) Childhood Obesity Facts (CDC website)
for further information please contact:

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