

Why Town Council Should Study the Use of Artificial Grass in Palm Beach

- Consideration of this issue now is timely because there is a significant uptick in the use of plastic grass on private property in town.

Artificial turf or grass is essentially a plastic rug, often containing dangerous chemicals from old tire (rubber) crumb products and other untested synthetics that are added to cushion and retard flames. Chemicals such as acetone, arsenic, benzene, chromium, halogenated flame retardants, lead (plastic blades), mercury, dioxin, carbon black, styrene and Butadiene have been detected in fake grass. Some of these chemicals have been proven carcinogenic. More of them are released as the fake grass ages. Its popularity proliferated first where water was scarce. On a national and international level, the argument against artificial grass centers around the single environmental benefit of water savings versus all of the other environmental issues associated with its use:

- Holds heat. (up to 200 degrees F.) No transpiration (cooling) effect in our yard and garden.
- Uses fossil fuels to manufacture; does not absorb CO₂ or emit oxygen as part of photosynthesis and off gases harmful compounds and these chemicals can seep into the surrounding environment and water table.
- Does not provide food for any living creatures at all (as do living plants and soil grasses.) Blocks access to soil beneath it, creating a hostile habitat for burrowing insects such as worms, native bees, as well as kills off natural bio-cycle microorganisms beneath it.
- Provides no benefit to any living thing.
- Must be cleaned with chemicals to keep sanitary (droppings by pets, squirrels, rats, birds, etc. may disappear physically, but leave invisible fecal bacteria and fungus behind. The normal bio-cycles of nature that would reduce these risks are absent. The women's soccer league has been pressuring FIFA for years about the safety of playing on artificial turf because of the greater risk of injury, and infection to scrapes and injuries from coming in contact with it by superbugs in the turf such as MRSA.
- Difficult and expensive to recycle; most ends up in a landfill.

Palm Beach residents want to be good stewards of our fragile, barrier island eco system. The proliferation of fake grass is entirely inconsistent with the Town's Green Initiative and its focus on reducing the use of plastics and chemicals in our environment.

Bobbie Lindsay January 11, 2020

[Birds Would Beg Us to Stop Using Artificial Turf](#)