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## Letter to editor: Artificial turf not only phony, but also harmful to the environment

**Susan Lerner** Special to the Daily News

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I was happy to hear at [last] week's Town Council meeting, attention drawn to the important environmental issue of synthetic turf.

While it may be tempting to be done with a lawn once and for all — and to replace the imperfect natural lawn with the "perfect" looking synthetic turf — imitation grass is not the eco-friendly alternative to natural groundcover that some people might suggest.

The production of synthetic grass emits carbons and uses fossil fuels; dangerous microplastics are generated by the physical and chemical degradation that happens through everyday use and exposure to the sun. Most importantly, synthetic grass doesn't offer any of the environmental benefits of living grass: moisture absorption, insect habitat, food for birds.

It offers nothing to anything living above it, and kills everything below it. And when it begins to show wear, it can't be patched or reseeded; it has to be rolled up and sent to the landfill.

This is an opportunity to respond to the needs of the environment around us. Appropriate, sustainable reactions to our environment-in-danger are happening worldwide, and here at home.

On June 5, the United Nations launched the 2021-2030 UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

The Green Initiative continues to be a success as more ficus hedges are replaced with indigenous options, and more residents and the town choose to have toxin-free landscapes.

Pan's Garden, Florida's first all-native botanical garden, continues to serve the community with its display of native options for sustainable landscapes. We have seen a surge of

residents visiting the garden for new ideas for trees, shrubs, groundcovers, vines and wildflowers, and to view our Demonstration Hedge.

The restoration of Phipps Ocean Park is on its way to becoming a reality.

Our answer to the calls to use synthetic turf should be similarly responsible. This is the time to realize the impact of our choices.

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