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Environmental Benefits of Turfgrass

NOISE ABATEMENT

“Grass plants have the ability to absorb sound!”

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

Noise pollution is an increasing problem in our urban areas, especially along highway corridors and around airports. Any noise above 90 decibels, a level frequently reached in our cities, is not only an annoyance but can actually subject the human heart to abnormal strain, according to medical reports.

Grass plants have the ability to absorb sound. Noise levels are affected by the softness or hardness of the surface over which sound travels. Because grassed areas present such an irregular soft surface, they are very effective at reducing noise levels.

Turf planted on the banks of a lowered expressway reduces traffic noise twice as much as paving on the same bank. Other studies have demonstrated that if a grassy turf is planted on a barrier slope facing a noise source, the noise reduction can be as much as 8-10 decibels. Sounds that do penetrate lawn and tree areas are rendered softer and less irritating.

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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