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Soil Conservation Starts at Home

Soil is perhaps our most important natural resource. Once the soil is gone, it's gone. It takes generations to replace. According to the Turf Resource Center, billions of tons of soil in the U.S. are lost by water and wind erosion each year. During the 1980's, it was estimated that the world lost 240 billion tons of topsoil in excess of new formation; that's more than half the amount found on all current US croplands combined. ⁽¹⁾ Roughly 75 billion tons of fertile topsoil is lost worldwide from agricultural systems every year. In the United States, we lose an estimated 6.9 billion tons each year. ⁽²⁾ When we lose soil, we are losing a resource that is, for practical purposes and human time spans, essentially non-renewable. An inch of soil takes between 200 - 1000 years to form, yet it can be swept away in a few seasons. ⁽³⁾

This unwanted movement of soil fills up streams, rivers and reservoirs which then cost tax payers millions of dollars a year to clean out.

As a lawn gardener, you become a soil conservationist. Turfgrass plants have a fibrous root system which is one of the best natural erosion control measures known. The root system can be made more extensive by good management procedures that involve mowing, liming, fertilization, core cultivation and pest control.

The tiny roots of a grass plant form a safety net system which holds soil in place. As roots die off, to be replaced by new tissue, the soil is enriched by microorganisms that form humus. By carefully following proven lawn care procedures, you act as an important soil conservationist.

For more information about the benefits ot turfgrass visit *www.TurfResourceCenter.org* or *www.TheLawnInstitute.org*.

^{(1) (}State of the World 1990, pg 60; WW Norton publisher).

⁽²⁾ Dr. David Pimentel, Professor of Ecology, Cornell University

⁽³⁾ Dr. Patricia S. Muir, Professor Botany & Plant Pathology, Oregon State University, "Human Impacts on Ecosystems" 2007