FYN Garden Q & A Series

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Yards & Neighborhoods

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
IFAS Extension
LEE COUNTY
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

FYN Topic: Artificial Turf

Question: My neighbor wants to replace his yard with artificial turf. What are some reasons I can give him to advice against it?
—-Dolores from a community in Ft Myers

Answer: Synthetic or artificial turf (AT) no longer has the appearance of Astro turf. AT products are now sold and marketed to athletic field and park managers, landscapers and gardeners. 90% of AT products now sold are 'made in the USA' in carpet factories in Georgia. However, AT is not considered to be a Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ product. No plant roots are present to filter and clean rain water of excess nutrients. And, no natural, healthy grass is present to attract wildlife. AT does not cut down on glare and noise like real turf. And, most important of all cannot absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen to our environment. AT has also been found to have a substantially higher surface temperature than a natural lawn. When new, the rubber granules often contain polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) at levels above health-based soil standards. However, the level of PAHs generally decline as the AT ages. Also, in some cases, heavy metal contents of AT exceed limits for natural soil. Higher then normal zinc content may be a concern while lead concentrations appear to stay well below EPA standards.

Florida Friendly Landscapes

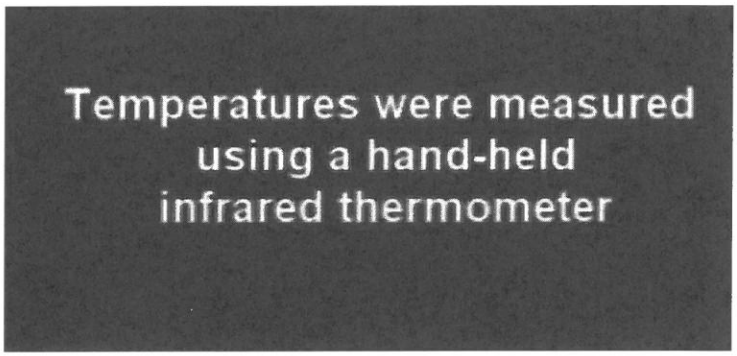
Useful Links

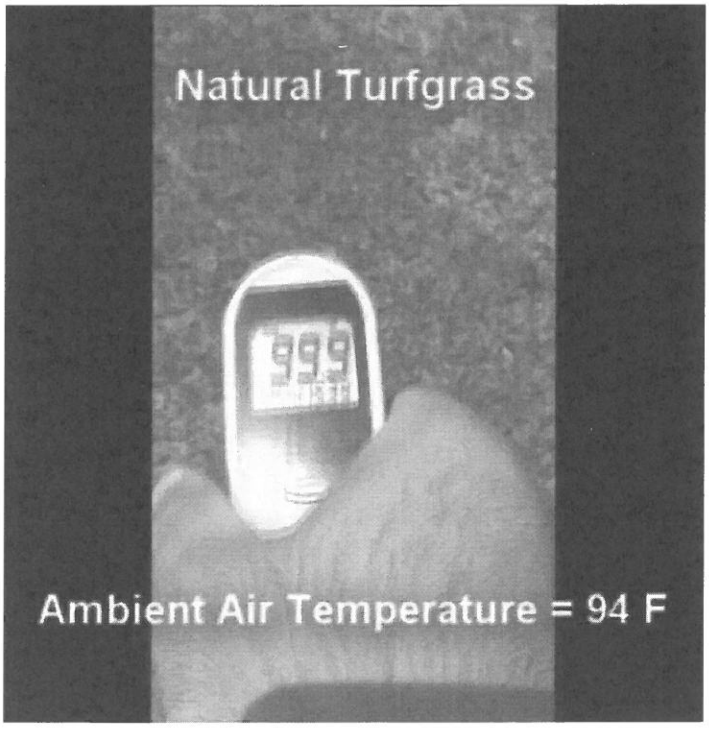
http://www.floridayards.org
http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu
http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/
http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml

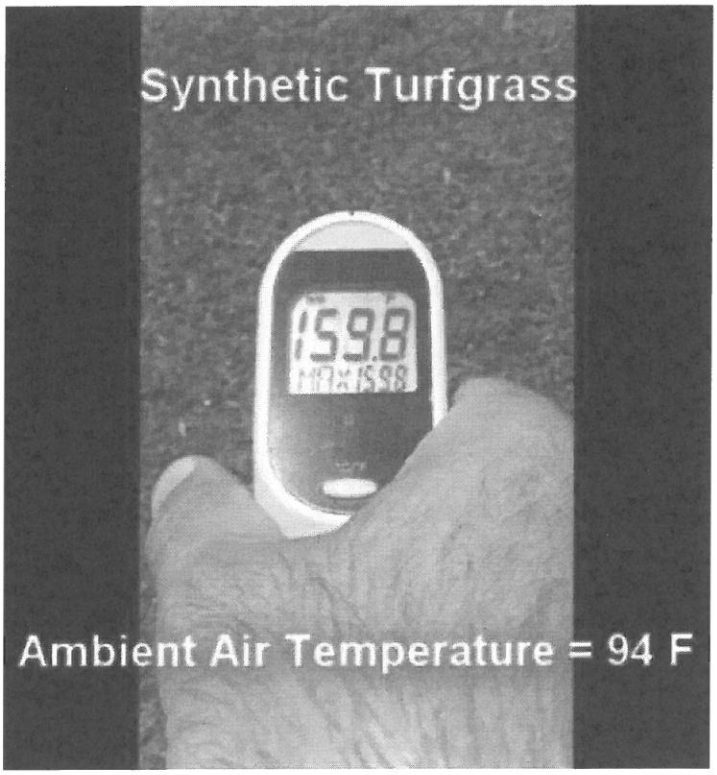
Thomas Becker is an extension agent for the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods (FYN) program at the Lee County Extension Service. Submit questions by calling the Horticulture Help Desk at 533-7504 between 9 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. or by emailing Extgardener@leegov.com. Visit his Web page at http://lee.ifas.ufl.edu/FYN/FYNHome.shtml

ATTACHMENT C

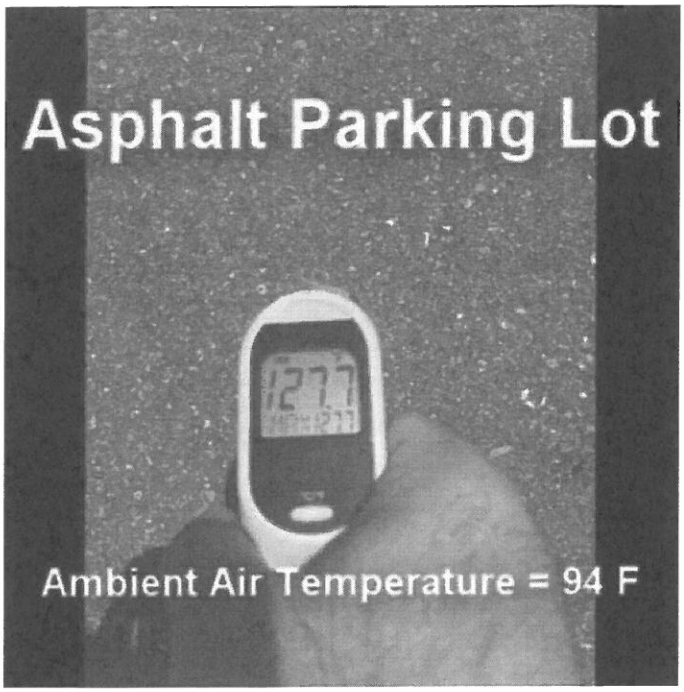
Temperature of Product (i.e., Heat Island Effect)[9]

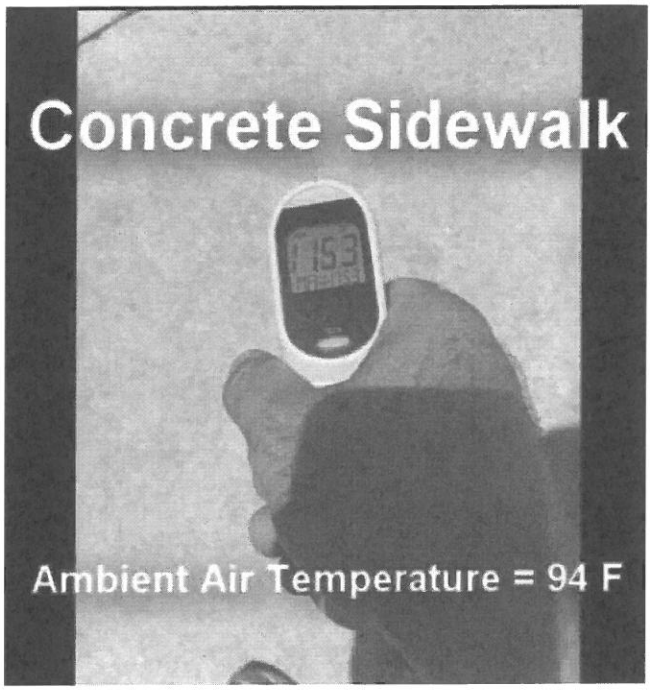






[9] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dU2qLRrPDYg


Asphalt Parking Lot
127.7
Ambient Air Temperature = 94 F


Concrete Sidewalk
115.3
Ambient Air Temperature = 94 F