

The Sunbelt Times

The latest in sod news, tips & tricks, and more.

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p. 813-641-9855

f. 813-434-9038

e. quotes@sunbeltsod.com

w. www.sunbeltsod.com



Artificial Turf

Sodding athletic fields in Bermuda is one of our specialties. We're seeing more and more athletic fields turn to artificial turf. This poses a problem to everyone, not just those of us who install sod.

As a whole, artificial turf is predominately plastic with an exception for the rubber beads used to imitate dirt. These materials can have a high concentration of chemicals & other pollutants which can cause irritation, medical troubles, and problems in local waterways. In addition to the environmental concerns, there are numerous concerns from athletes as well. Plastic surfaces are known to harbor bacteria that can cause infection, and is very difficult on the body as is evidenced by a number of injuries in professional sports which have caused professional athletes to boycott playing on artificial turf.

Natural grasses create oxygen, offer erosion control, and cooling properties to its local environment, all of which are negated by increased artificial turf use. One of the most common misconceptions is that Artificial Turf is maintenance free which is not the case at all!

Watering Sod in Drought Conditions

When we are at peak heat & drought conditions, water is pertinent for living organisms like grass. However; while water is the best option, it does not compare to natural rain. Keeping irrigation systems or water trucks going is basic life support. It's not going to make your grass thrive, but it is going to keep it alive. You will see it really take off once regular rains start and continue.



Perennial Peanut

Perennial Peanut is a ground cover that can be laid like sod in pallets or rolls, or planted in pots or planters. It is more of a flower than sod; however, it is a beautiful alternative to sod that is low-maintenance once established. It does not require fertilizer, and requires very little mowing as it is a slow vertical grower.

Throughout the warmer months, it has a beautiful yellow/orange flower, but you won't see it bloom in the cooler months, as it is not a fan of cold weather.

While it is a slow vertical grower, it does spread horizontally, but not more than 5-7" per year, which makes it non-invasive.

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Sunbelt Sod

COOKBOOK

CHEDDAR JALAPENO PRETZELS

INGREDIENTS

Pretzel Dough

- 4.5 c All-Purpose Flour
- 4.5 tsp Active Dry Yeast
- 5 tbsp Unsalted Butter
- 1 c Water
- 1 c Milk
- 1.5 tbsp Sugar
- 1.25 tsp Salt

Pretzel Bath & Baking

- 2 c Sharp Cheddar Cheese
- 2 tbsp Baking Soda
- 6 c Water (boiling hot)
- 1 c Jalapeno (pickled slices, 3-5 slices per pretzel)



DIRECTIONS

- Pour lukewarm water in a wide mixing bowl. Mix in sugar then yeast, let sit undisturbed for 10-15 minutes until yeast has bloomed
- Add 4 cups of flour, lukewarm milk, salt, and room temperature (not melted) butter and mix with spatula to bring dough together
- With dough hook on stand mixer, or by hand, knead dough for 5 minutes, adding 1 tbsp more flour at a time (dough should not be very dry). Move dough to a clean buttered or oiled bowl. Cover & let rise until more than double in size (1-2 hours)
- While waiting for dough to rise, preheat oven to 450 degrees F & line 2-3 baking sheets (to accommodate 16 pretzels, 5-6 per sheet) with parchment paper & set aside.
- Punch down the dough. Transfer to a work board lightly dusted with flour. Divide dough into 16 equal portions.
- Heat a deep & wide sauce pan with 6-7 cups of water until water starts boiling.
- Take one section of dough at a time & make a long rope. Place rope in U shape, then twist the ends inward, crossing each other & place ends on opposite bottom edges of the U. Wet your hands & attach ends onto edges to seal.
- Add baking soda to boiling water & mix well. Fully submerge one pretzel at a time & let it dip in soda-bath for 15-20 secs. Place on baking sheet lined with parchment paper, then repeat with all remaining dough.
- Top each pretzel with 5-6 slices of pickled jalapeno & a handful of grated sharp cheddar cheese. Bake for 10-14 minutes, until tops are golden brown - don't let the cheese burn! Then brush with melted butter & serve warm.