

## Artificial Grass: Pros and Cons

Do you look at your balcony thinking it needs a little bit more greenery to bring it to life? Perhaps artificial grass seems like an enticing option. Before you pull out your credit card, consider these pros and cons:

### Pros:

- Easy to maintain. No watering, weeding, or trimming needed.
- Durability. It can last for up to 25 years.
- Helps to maximize your small living area by creating a functional and aesthetically pleasing environment to relax and enjoy the outdoors.
- Looks great year-round, remaining lush and green no matter the weather.

### Cons:

- Contains numerous chemicals, some of which may cause adverse health effects.
- Can be a breeding ground for bacteria if you don't have proper drainage.
- Can get very hot in the warmer months.



- Can deteriorate quickly in high-traffic areas, or if exposed to a lot of sunlight.
- It's not biodegradable so it will end up in a landfill after its lifespan.

If you do decide to use artificial grass on your balcony, be sure to check if your condo rules and municipality allow it.



## Opening Up Your Summer Vacation Home

It's the time of year when most people mark the unofficial beginning of summer, and if you have a summer vacation home or cottage, you are likely opening it up soon. If that's you, read on for a handy checklist.

Before arriving, check that your **insurance is up to date**, and **pre-arrange to have your utilities hooked up and inspected**.

Once there, **assess your property**, paying attention to areas such as the roof and eaves, windows, screens, the exterior seal, and the posts underneath your deck for signs of disrepair, any signs of mould or mildew (which could indicate a leak), and any evidence of pest activity. Check that **smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working** and not expired.

Have **propane tanks** inspected if it's been over a year, and refill or replace if needed.

Before you get a drink of water, **run the tap** for a couple of minutes. Check that you are **stocked up on all your essentials**, including first aid supplies.

Finally, roll up your sleeves and do a deep clean. Wash linens and towels that haven't been used all winter.

Then, **crack those windows open**, and let the soft, summer breeze in, as you sit back, relax, and enjoy the summer.

## Don't Get Shocked: Educate Yourself About Electrical Safety

May is Electrical Safety Month, so in that spirit, here are some tips to keep your condo free of electrical hazards.

- Do not join extension cords. Use cords that are long enough for each application.
- Do not plug major appliances or space heaters into extension cords.
- Inspect cords regularly for damage and replace as necessary.
- Cap outlets if you have small children.
- Avoid overloading outlets or extension cords (warm to touch is an indicator) or running through water or snow on the ground.
- Ensure that the outlets in any room with a water supply, such as kitchens and bathrooms, have Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs).
- Dust around appliances and devices and ensure air can circulate around them.
- Pull on the plug, not the cord when disconnecting devices from the power supply.
- Hire a qualified electrician for electrical work to ensure that everything is done as per building code requirements.



And don't forget to test smoke alarms monthly, change batteries every 6 months, and replace every 10 years, so you are prepared for a worst-case scenario.