

Artificial Grass: Pros and Cons

Do you stare at your lawn thinking that you'd rather not spend precious summer hours cutting and watering it? Perhaps artificial grass seems like an enticing option. Before you start tearing up your yard, consider these pros and cons:

Pros:

- Cheaper to maintain, but more expensive upfront.
- No watering, weeding, or fertilizing needed.
- Always green and usable (grass can get muddy after rain, whereas artificial grass dries quickly).
- Good for steep areas that are difficult to mow, and shady areas where regular grass may not thrive because of lack of sunlight.

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 sunny spaces.
- Can deteriorate quickly in high-traffic areas.
- Water run-off from artificial grass can cause chemicals to end up in the water supply. Also, it's not biodegradable so it will end up in a landfill after its lifespan.

If you do decide to switch to artificial grass, be sure to check if your municipality allows 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 home 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 cords through water or snow.
- 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.