

## **Easigrass is the most eco-friendly option**

South Africa is a water scarce country and homeowners need to rethink how they use this precious resource. Maintaining a thirsty lush green lawn that requires constant watering and mowing may no longer be an option, according to Dr Mehran Zarrebini, head of Easigrass, which is distributed by Van Dyck in South Africa.

“Watering gardens is usually the first thing that’s curtailed when water restrictions are introduced during droughts. But using too much water is just one of the reasons why large grassed areas are not necessarily environmentally friendly. Apart from needing large quantities of water, lawns also require the use of weed killers, pesticides and fertilizers which seep into and contaminate precious ground water,” he points out.

Dr Zarrebini says that more and more gardeners are realising that substituting real grass with artificial turf is not restricted to large sports fields. Since leading artificial turf brand, Easigrass, arrived in South Africa in 2012, more and more South Africans have installed artificial grass on terraces and in small town house gardens. It has also worked well on roof gardens and in shady spots in larger gardens where natural grass is extremely difficult to grow.

He says that the 2017 drought in the Western Cape proved that homeowners could no longer take large grassed areas for granted with many installing Easigrass over dusty dry areas in order to ensure that they could maintain their outdoor lifestyles and that children and pets could play outside safely and hygienically.

“That drought may be over but other parts of our country are still struggling. Each and every one of us needs to contribute by adopting a more eco-friendly lifestyle and taking proactive steps to lessen our impact on the environment,” he says.

According to scientists, South Africa receives an annual rainfall of 492 millimetres whereas the rest of the earth receives 985 millimetres<sup>1</sup>. This is nearly half the earth’s average.

Yet, despite this substantially lower rainfall, South Africans still use an average of 237 litres of water per person per day – only marginally less than the global average of 273 litres.<sup>2</sup>

An added problem is the uneven distribution of rainfall across South Africa. The eastern half of the country is much wetter than the western half.

South Africa also experiences alternating periods of droughts and floods. Ultimately, according to researchers, South Africa will experience much wetter wet seasons and much drier dry seasons, resulting in an increase in floods and droughts.<sup>1</sup>

‘Easigrass not only helps in drought conditions but also improves drainage and lessens soil erosion during heavy rains. The water seeps through the artificial turf into the soil, reducing damaging run off. With artificial turf, there’s no mud or dust,’ he notes.

An added bonus is a huge saving on water bills. As water infrastructure ages in South Africa, replacement and increased maintenance will make it more and more expensive every time you open your tap,” Dr Zarrebini adds.

He estimates that approximately 25mm is used to maintain each square metre of grass per week. This equates to 1 000 litres per week on a 40m<sup>2</sup> lawn. (The amount of water needed is influenced by the climate, season, soil type and type of vegetation.)

American statisticians estimate that, each year, an average household uses over 83 279 litres of water to irrigate an average sized lawn – nearly enough to fill a swimming pool.<sup>3</sup>

Natural grass requires mowing and the pollution emitted by lawn mowers is as toxic as vehicle emissions. American statisticians therefore estimate that a single lawn mower will create pollution that is equivalent to that generated by forty brand new vehicles over a distance of 19 300 kilometres.<sup>3</sup>

Lawnmowers also use petrol or electricity generated by coal-burning power stations which is not as environmentally friendly.<sup>3</sup>

Dr Zarrebini adds that huge strides have been made in creating eco-friendly artificial turf that closely resembles real grass and is just as aesthetically pleasing to home owners.

Easigrass, the world's leading artificial grass brand, is based in the United Kingdom and has been researching, developing and designing artificial grass for over 30 years. Products are recognized by horticultural and design associations across the world.

Because European and South African grasses are completely different, Easigrass South Africa has researched, designed and launched nine artificial grasses that resemble popular local varieties. This means that Easigrass blends with indigenous and drought tolerant plants to produce attractive contemporary outdoor areas.

Sources:

1. <http://www.waterwise.co.za/site/water/environment/situation.html>
2. Daily Mav Erick
3. <https://conserve.com/environmental-benefits-of-artificial-grass/>
4. Charles Crobsy of the Water Research Council (Ielanda)

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