

Estimating Lawn Projects

Artificial grass and natural grass projects for lawns are estimated in similar ways. To succeed, each type of installation material needs the very best solution and guidelines. Site preparation, drainage, irrigation and lighting considerations can vary between these two different "system" and so do many of the job materials required.

Artificial grass systems are made up of components such as artificial grass surface materials, infill materials, seaming materials and supplies. Specialized tools and equipment are used to install artificial turf systems such as drop spreaders and power brushes for landscape and leisure sports projects. Larger equipment is considered for areas that warranty the power and production - however, most residential and commercial property installations should be estimated using small-construction hand-tools, power equipment and manually labor .

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Contract Expectations & Regulations

Each state has regulations, codes and law that will determine what constitutes an appropriately written estimate and contract language in your state. Check with your local contractor's board to find out what you need to do to meet state and local specifications and standards.

In most states, expect to supply to your customer a scaled drawing, materials list and installation overview as part of the contract. Construction contracts, lien release forms, waivers, warranties and disclaimers may also be required. Pre-printed, multiple-part forms, with your company contact information, are the best. Most stationary stores carry blank master forms for business, or you can download a set of blank forms appropriate for most circumstances at [ASGi ONLINE](#).

Codes, Restrictions & REBATES

In the US, each state and county can have further codes and restrictions on the appropriate use of land within their domain of stewardship. Property owners may also have design guidelines and specifications dictated by their city, community or home owner's group.

Check with community and home owner associations for their specific codes and restrictions of the use of faux grass materials. Many may have restrictions on using these products as front lawns and have no guidelines restricting the use of artificial turf in the back yard.

REBATES are available in more and more communities in many countries of the world. REBATES are programs administered by the governing body that manages water or other public utilities and applications and program guidelines are determined by these groups.

For a list of known US REBATE programs go to the links located at [ASGi Consumer Pages available on www.asgi.us](#)

Keep Surprises to a Minimum

Production meetings provide the time to discuss job details and pre-plan for material, equipment and labor needs.

Check List of Common Considerations for Costing

- Turf Materials** - measured by SF or SY
- Infill Materials** - determined by lbs per SF or SY
- Seaming Tape** - linear foot
- Seaming Adhesives** - by liquid measure
- Fabric Staples** - each
- Seaming Tools** (disposable brushes, gloves) - each
- Stabilizing Fabric Materials** - measured by SF or SY
- Base Materials** - measured by yard, determined by overall SF of surface area and depth of materials at final grade - (depth x width x length)
- Drainage Materials**
 - Corrugated Flexible or Rigid Piping - LF
 - Connections - each
 - Drain Basins - each
 - Pipe Sock - LF
 - Drainage Rock - by the yard (depth x width x length)
- Irrigation Caps** or other materials - each
- Excavation** - Labor and Equipment
- Hauling and Dumping** - Fees and Expenses
- Shipping, Handling and Fuel**
- Skilled Labor Required**
- Rental Equipment** - where applicable
- Operations and Administrative Overhead**
- Applicable Sales and Use Taxes**

Every job is a custom project in the landscape industry, there's no cookie-cutter method anyone can follow to achieve "production" perfect results, every time. Thankfully, there are commonly used methods you can follow in estimating synthetic grass projects that will help you nail the numbers quickly and accurately. Remain flexible to handle last-minute challenges and, properly planned, your project will flow together effortlessly.

1. Artificial turf is relatively plum and raw materials are going to be ordered by either the roll or by the piece, in specific sizes. Smaller pieces are easier to lift and handle during installation.
2. Most artificial grass surface materials are manufactured in 15 foot widths and have a GRAIN so they must be built with the grain LAID IN THE SAME direction for optimum results with seams and overall appearance.
3. Always use two measuring tapes, and where necessary, a carpenter's square or T to help place guides as you create your pattern. Nothing in landscape seems to be perfectly square and artificial grass materials are not perfect, either. Provide enough material in your estimate to exceed design marks to insure you won't come up shy on materials at an edge.
4. A clear pattern, indicating each piece of turf (using letters or numbers), where seams are and which direction the grain should go is a must.

This provides everyone a snap shot, on paper, of what you (as designer) are seeing during designing and estimating the project. Using color on your design is also helpful in distinguishing pieces, seams, electric and irrigation systems.

5. Build your installation pattern keeping material widths in mind and you will reduce overall material waste. Placement of larger pieces within your pattern will show where materials will be trimmed - these materials can be used to cover another part of the design, as long as the surface grain remains in the SAME direction. Budget for additional labor and materials for fitting and seaming time.

Design from the "bird's eye" point of view. It's easy to create a pattern for any job specification from this vantage point. Use a flexible tape to take measurements and remember to allow for the rise and fall of the final grade by draping the tapes over the ground. Round up to the next linear foot when estimating.

Use a second page for job details. Clearly written bulleted items or pre-printed forms can help communicate important job notes to other team members and helps to clearly define your contractual obligations to your client.

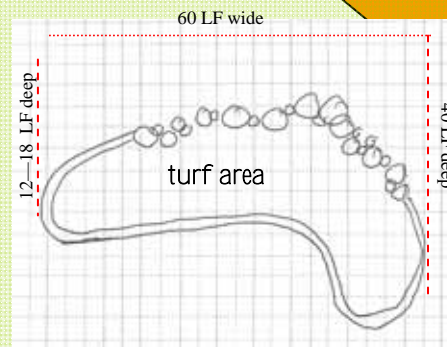
ASGi recommends taking an **overall** measurement of both the maximum width (W) and depth (D) of the area when you begin.

Indicate the area's W x D on your site drawing.

We suggest that you use Width x Depth, (W x D) in that order, when calling out your turf pieces on your design plan and pattern.

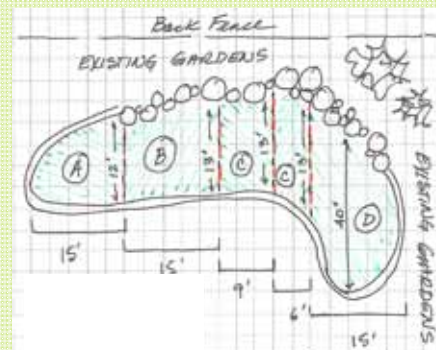
Note:

The example to the right shows several pieces of turf—each letter indicating the total use of a piece of 15 foot wide material. When transferring this information to a job's materials' order—you can use the lettering to indicate the size of separate pieces needed for the job.



Indicate overall W x D on plan to help with site orientation

Color helps to highlight specifics



TERMINOLOGY

ASGi recommends using standard, simplified terminology so that the designer, estimator and installation team will know and understand what is expected.

A few terms that are common to the types of processes or specifications we use with synthetic turf are:

Pattern: Define the installation area and then determine your turf needs by creating a pattern or map of what pieces, at what size, are appropriate to complete the job with the least amount of waste possible. You should be able to duplicate your pattern on the ground with your tape measures.

Indicating seams, water, electricity and other dynamics on the site worksheet. Using colored pens or pencils is always helpful, for highlight.

Turf Grain: The blades of a roll of turf with a pile height will tend to lean a certain way when unrolled for installation. Turf blades need to go in the same direction so that seams won't show. For best results, never attempt to turn and seam turf pieces at opposing angles or directions.

Estimating (con't from page 2)

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EDGES

Every job has an outer perimeter shape where the turf ends. How to identify and cost the appropriate edge "treatment" is determined by what type of edge it is.

We offer the following to help clarify edging:

Hard Edge: Hard edges will not move and will require the added attention of a hand-cut finish.

This would include curbed edges, fence, walls, existing concrete, asphalt or other decking, pathway, drive or walkways.

Soft Edge: Soft edges are flexible in their finishing and do not require a precision cut edge along a hard surface.

A soft edge would include one hidden under rocks or other materials.



Hard Edges



Soft Edges



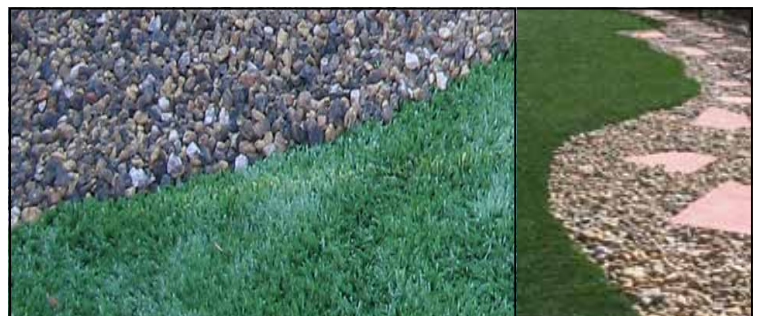
SOFT EDGE TREATMENTS

Tucked Edge: Tucked edges of turf are HIDDEN under some type of element such as rocks, small boulders, block or even poured concrete.



Rolled Edge: Rolled edges are created using a specific building technique that allows you to form a closed edge that is appropriate to backfill with materials such as bark, gravel or other decorative landscape materials.

A rolled edge can be used instead of using a board or curb edge.



Estimating—Key Points to Remember

- Access to the site—is it within 50 feet and fairly level? Stairs, slopes and other obstacles will add time to any type of materials movement!
- Staging—where will you place tools and job materials for use and storage
- Any additional equipment required
- Site Security
- Area Preparation
- Site Construction
- Any sub-contractors required
- Any shipping considerations
- Any weather issues or potential for delay

Glossary (check online at ASGi.us for a comprehensive [industry glossary](#))

TRIM: Any type of material that touches the outside edge of the turf. The term TRIM could refer to decorative gravels, bark, rocks, walls, concrete, asphalt, block or bender board garden edges.

EDGE: The term **EDGE** is used to describe the treatment of the outer edge of the grass installation.

The term **HARD Edge** describes the turf butting up to elements that cannot/will not move; concrete patios, pads or walkways, asphalt driveways, retaining, sitting or garden walls. **HARD Edges** must be hand-trimmed to fit.

The term **SOFT Edge** describes any turf edge that might be hidden under an element such as rock and does not require the precision of a hand-cut edge.

The term **ROLLED Edge** refer to edges that are specifically designed to appear as if they end at back-filled materials like gravel or bark. A properly executed rolled edge can be an elegant substitute for bender board trim.

The term **TUCKED Edge** refers to turf edges that are hidden under rocks, wall block, RR Ties or other elements

Common Conversions

Total Square Feet

$Width \times Depth = Total \text{ Square Feet}$

Convert Square Feet (SF) to Square Yards (SY)

$Total \text{ SF divided by } 9 = SY$

Convert Square Yards to Square Feet

$Total \text{ SY multiplied by } 9 = SF$

How many cubic yards of material do we need?

$Total \text{ SF divided by } 324 \times \# \text{ of inches deep}$

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