

Why artificial carpet is taking over homes and compounds

People want something neat and modern. Artificial grass does not require slashing, watering or constant care.

BY SHABIBAH NAKIRIGYA

When you move around residential areas such as Najjera, Kisaasi, Kololo and Muyenga your first spot is the green balconies, sitting rooms and even rooftops are being covered in similar lush layers.

The trending use of green carpet commonly known as artificial turf is steadily transforming homes and compounds in Kampala and its suburbs, as residents seek beauty, convenience and lower maintenance costs.

For years, well-manicured natural lawns were a preserve of hotels, schools and affluent households with the time and resources to water, trim and fertilise grass. But with increasingly busy urban life-

styles, many homeowners are opting for synthetic alternatives that promise a permanent green look without the hassle.

"I was tired of mud during the rainy season and dust during the dry spell," says Hellen Namata, a resident of Kisaasi. "With the green carpet, my compound is clean throughout the year. The children can play without stepping in puddles."

She adds that at first you may think that green carpet is very expensive but in long run you realise that it has several advantages than natural grass, because they do not need any attention as long as they are kept safe.

Low maintenance appeal

Stella Namuleme a dealer in

BLENDING NATURAL AND SYNTHETIC

Namuleme also points out that residents are opting for a hybrid approach maintaining small patches of natural plants and flowers alongside artificial grass to preserve a touch of biodiversity.

"Green carpet can enhance beauty if used strategically. Combine it with potted plants, trees and proper drainage. The goal should be balance rather than complete replacement of nature," she advises.

As the trend continues to spread from upscale neighbourhoods to middle-income estates, one thing is clear; the desire for year round greenery is reshaping the look of Kampala's homes.

home and interior decoration says that demand has grown sharply over the past two years, especially among young families and rental property owners looking to enhance the appearance of their premises.

"People want something neat and modern. Artificial grass does not require slashing, watering or constant care. Once installed it can last between five and eight years depending on quality," she explains.

She revealed that most of her clients are homeowners who are upgrading their compounds and landlords seeking to attract tenants.

"The carpet is typically laid on compacted soil or concrete and fitted with drainage layers to allow water to pass through during heavy rains. It is advisable to use an expert in fixing this carpet because it needs measurement and glue to look nice and fitting," she says.

According to Namuleme, prices for artificial carpets vary depending on thickness and size, ranging from Shs55,000 per square metre, excluding installation.

"Beyond compounds, interior designers, green carpet is now being used creatively indoors in children's bedrooms, play areas, balconies and home gyms to create a natural ambience," she says.

Aesthetic and social media influence

She also reveals that the trend has also been fueled by social media platforms where homeowners share photos of immaculate lawns and cosy outdoor setups.

"Influencers often showcase before-and-after transformations, inspiring others to replicate the look. Many clients come with screenshots from Instagram or TikTok," says Namuleme.

She notes that event planners too, have embraced artificial turf for temporary functions, reinforcing its visibility and desirability in residential spaces.

"They want that fresh lawn feel for birthdays, bridal showers and family gatherings and when you look for events with artificial grass carpet it looks amazing," she says.

Environmental concerns

However, the rising popularity of synthetic grass has sparked debate among environmentalists and urban planners.

Samuel Otai, an environmental conservationist, cautions that while artificial turf reduces water use, it also replaces natural vegetation that contributes to cooling and biodiversity.

"Natural grass absorbs carbon dioxide, supports insects and improves soil health. When we replace it with plastic-based materials, we lose those ecological benefits," he says. He adds that improper disposal of worn-out turf could contribute to plastic waste if recycling systems are not strengthened. "I argue that practical considerations often outweigh environmental concerns, particularly in densely populated urban areas where space and water are limited," he says.

