



# Turf Wars

TEXT BY KIM HILL

*New lawn alternatives end the battle for the perfect plot of grass*

Landscape architect Chad Robert suggests making bold statements with lawn alternatives. In this space, he added a burst of color by installing chips of blue tumbled glass in a bed planted with agaves. Pebbles were used in the adjacent beds.

An attractive lawn is a source of pride for many homeowners. In fact, according to experts, Americans are willing to spend approximately \$30 billion a year on products and lawn-care services to get picture-perfect turf.

But getting that emerald isle of green can be a challenge, especially in the low desert. Lawns take a lot of tender, loving care in the form of water usage, fertilization and maintenance.

Homeowners who love the look of grass now have another option: synthetic lawns. Today's man-made grasses have come a long way from their origins and

have earned a legion of fans among landscape architects, homeowners and design professionals. Phoenix architect James Kottke, AIA, for example, has used synthetic grass in designs for at least 10 clients and installed the product at his own home in central Phoenix.

"Synthetic grass has been a phenomenal product," the architect notes. In his yard, large trees shaded the natural sod for most of the day. "I could never get the grass to grow evenly," he admits. The lack of sunlight and the turf's location, adjacent to the pool, resulted in what he describes as "a splotchy yard with brown spots year-round."