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Ideal time to lay turf

WINTER is the perfect time to give your home an outdoor makeover. The cooler months are no excuse to neglect your backyard and these cooler months are the perfect time for laying new turf.

Jason Hodges, landscaper and presenter of Channel 7's Better Homes and Gardens, said the benefits of turfed outdoor areas are abundant including an improvement in lifestyle and health.

"Turfed areas are great for families as the kids are able to run around, play with their favourite games and family pet or even play a bit of footy. It is also fantastic for holding outdoor social events, whether you prefer barbeques and picnics, and green areas have even been found to improve happiness and wellbeing, making people feel more relaxed and closer to nature," Mr Hodges said.

"Turf also has a huge range of environmental benefits such as improving air quality, reducing noise and heat in and around the home, and can also assist with protecting properties from bushfires."

According to Turf Australia, other benefits Australians will enjoy by laying turf include: Five square meters of turf lawn provides all the oxygen needed by a person each day - meaning the average backyard produces enough oxygen for a family of four; Turf is the safest surface for outdoor leisure activi-

ties; Turf provides a natural sink for carbon dioxide - it takes carbon from the atmosphere and stores it in the soil; Turf has the cooling effect of 9 tonnes of air-conditioning, an impressive figure when you consider that the average home air conditioner which has a 3-4 tonne capacity and increases carbon dioxide emissions; While winter's the perfect time to install turf, it prepares your home for a cooler mid-summer, creating an environment: 10 degrees cooler than bare soil, 20 degrees cooler than asphalt, concrete or pebble mulch, 40 degrees cooler than dry synthetic turf.

Turf also prevents soil erosion while filtering runoff water and traps pollutants before they get to our rivers and streams destroying natural vegetation and fragile ecosystems

There are five main types of Turf grass grown in Australia, Buffalo, Carpet Grass, Couch, Kikuyu and Tall Fescue. Each has a different colour, blade thickness and location suitability.

The Turf Australia website at www.turfaustralia.com.au provides advice on the best type of turf for your area and needs. The Turf Australia website can also direct you to your local turf supplier and provide further information on the environmental benefits and maintenance tips.