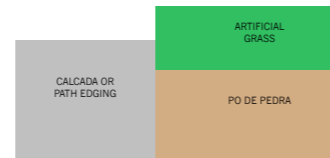




Last issue we talked about the many different types and quality of artificial grass, the next obvious stage is to discuss the ground preparation... But hold on a minute – I want to fast forward you to what you want the end product to look like. How you want it to blend in with the rest of your garden. Get these areas sorted in your mind and you will find DIY preparation will be easier than you might think. Equally importantly, if you are employing someone else to do the job you will be able to obtain a hard and fast quotation, and the job will go ahead without any hitches, and by the way, the installer will love you for your foresight.

The bit in the middle of the lawn is easy. The edges and surrounds for features and trees are the areas that demand some forethought. The easy one - Calcada or path edging. This is a good one to start with as the “hard edge” of the lawn area frequently dictates the level that you start the project.



I try not to use the “L” word as gardens, by their nature

are rarely level. Don't be afraid of a few ups and downs. It gives character. Plan your depth from the top down - Rule of thumb is to have 1.5 - 2cm of grass above a hard edge. For lawn installations you need a minimum of 5 cms of infill. The deeper the better. A coarse grit sand with some fine powder in the mix so that it sets reasonably hard after wetting and compacting. Pó de Pedra is ideal. Available from most builders merchants. You will need 5 cubic metres for 100 m2 of lawn. The primary function of this infill is to give the finished lawn good, clean drainage. If you put the grass on top of bare soil you will get muddy water coming up through the drain holes.

Straight lawn edge. Really easy to do well. Having removed your soil from the area and levelled it. From your local timber yard get lengths of rough sawn 5cm x 75 cm (3”x2”). Drill these every 50 cm to knock a securing pin through. Re-Bar from building sites is ideal for pinning. Run a length of string along the outer edge you are working to and put the timbers in place and firmly bed them down before securing with 50 cm nails



of re-bar. If you have been over enthusiastic with your digging in places put a pad of cement mix under the timber. If you are in a damp area treat the timber to a coat of Cuprinol. Level the sand with the timber, making sure it is compacted well. When you lay the grass lead it over the top and down

Calcada circle round tree - Looks really nice and is well worth doing in high visibility areas. I figure that after many years the roots will dislodge the calcada, but if you give the trunk a wide enough berth the visual effect is stunning

Ray Shepherd,  
Resident of  
Praia da Luz,  
Partner in Mãos  
Verdes, artificial  
grass suppliers.



# Green, Green Grass of Home



Tapered edges - You don't often see these, which is a shame. I think this could be because people get carried away with the “L” word. Simply put - ensuring a good cover of geotextile barrier (more of this later), taper the sand into the area that you are edging the lawn up to. Looks good and is extremely cost effective and will ensure that your lawn looks less geometric, and the use of local stone for the edging adds reality.



The bit in the middle of the lawn - Easy peasy. Ensure that the correct depth is dug out. If the soil is loose underneath it must be compacted. You can hire good vibrator compactors. Smooth the sand in place. Spray with a little water. Don't drown it. Run compactor over the area ONCE ONLY. Do not keep going round and round. Having done that and smoothed out any other imperfections, give it another good sprinkle with water. Leave to dry – at least overnight until a hard crust has formed, and you are ready for the next phase.



the exposed edge. Use big headed nails or staples to secure the grass to the timber.

Trees and their roots - As long as you forget the “L word” roots are not an issue. I mean they were there before you took out the old soil. Remove as much of the loose soil as possible. When you put in the sand taper it in towards the trunk. Don't forget to bury and irrigation pipes for the tree. When you come to lay the grass a really natural effect is achieved. Helped by the fact that it isn't level.

Next month Geotextile barrier, trimming the grass, making good joints, happiness.