

Artificial Grass in Aurora: 2026 Cost & ROI Report

Installation pricing, ten-year ownership costs, water-bill impacts and payback analysis for Aurora homeowners

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Artificial Grass Aurora Research publishes data-driven local studies on residential landscaping, water use and outdoor surfaces in Aurora and the Greater Toronto Area. This report is provided free for information purposes.

ABSTRACT

This report assembles published 2026 pricing for residential artificial-grass installation in Aurora and the Greater Toronto Area, then models the ten-year cost of owning a synthetic lawn against a natural lawn on a typical Aurora property. All inputs are drawn from published sources — installer price guides, the Town of Aurora's 2026 water and wastewater rates, and Environment and Climate Change Canada climate normals — with every modelling assumption stated where it is used.

We find that a mid-range artificial lawn for a typical 500 sq ft Aurora backyard costs **\$6,500–\$9,000 installed**, that irrigating the same natural lawn uses roughly **27.9 m³ of water per season (about \$169 at Aurora's 2026 combined rate)**, and that the investment breaks even in approximately **five years when compared against professionally serviced lawn care** — but does not pay back against do-it-yourself care, where the trade-off is the owner's time rather than money.

KEY FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

\$10–25

per sq ft, installed price
range published for the
GTA in 2026

\$6.06/m³

Aurora's 2026 combined
water + wastewater rate

\$169/yr

seasonal irrigation cost for
a 500 sq ft lawn

≈5 yrs

break-even vs
professionally serviced
lawn care (500 sq ft)

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1 The Aurora market and the 2026 pricing basis

Aurora is an affluent, low-density town of 62,057 residents and 21,506 occupied private dwellings, 60.4% of them single-detached and 81.2% owner-occupied [1][2]. Typical estate lots run 50–60 ft wide — new subdivisions such as Highland Gate (180 homes on 50–60 ft lots on a former golf course) and Fernbrook's Princeton Heights (estate homes from ~\$3M) set the tone [3][4]. At an average detached home price of roughly \$1.68M [5], curb appeal and low-maintenance landscaping carry real dollar weight.

Three published price references anchor this report's 2026 cost basis: a GTA-wide installer's guide, a York Region-serving firm's volume tiers, and another GTA installer's published range (Table 1). They are consistent: **most Aurora residential projects price between \$10 and \$25 per sq ft installed**, with the middle of the market at \$13–\$18.

Table 1 — Published 2026 installed-price references for the Aurora/GTA market. Sources: [6][7][8].

Reference	Basis	Published figure
GTA installer guide (entry / mid / premium)	fully installed, residential	\$10–12 / \$13–18 / \$19–25+ per sq ft
York Region-serving installer	volume tiers by area	\$9.90 (800+) / \$11.90 (400–799) / \$14.90 (200–399)
Another GTA installer	fully installed	\$14–\$22 per sq ft
Same GTA guide, typical project	400–700 sq ft backyard	\$5,000–\$12,000 total

Material typically accounts for \$3–8 per sq ft, with excavation, aggregate base, compaction, labour and finishing making up the remainder [8]. York Region's heavy clay soils hold water and heave in freeze-thaw cycles, so base preparation in Aurora tends to be a larger line item than in sandier parts of the GTA.

2 What a typical Aurora project costs

Applying the mid-market band to three representative backyard sizes produces the project estimates in Table 2. The mid-market midpoint (\$15.50/sq ft) is used for the single-figure column; the range column spans the published \$13–\$18 mid band.

Table 2 — Representative project costs at published mid-market rates. Derived from [6]; assumptions in \$M.

Project	Area	At \$15.50/sq ft	At \$13–18/sq ft
Compact courtyard / side yard	300 sq ft	\$4,650	\$3,900–\$5,400
Typical family backyard	500 sq ft	\$7,750	\$6,500–\$9,000
Large or deep lot	700 sq ft	\$10,850	\$9,100–\$12,600

These are planning figures, not quotes. A typical Aurora family backyard of about 500 sq ft — the reference project used throughout this report — lands at **\$6,500–\$9,000 installed**.

3 Ten-year cost comparison: artificial vs natural

The correct comparison frame is total cost of ownership over the surface's service life. Quality residential turf is routinely warranted for 10–15 years; this report uses a ten-year window. Table 3 sets out both ownership stacks. Every figure is either published (and cited) or labelled as an assumption in the methodology.

Table 3 — Ten-year ownership stacks for a 500 sq ft Aurora lawn. Sources and assumptions: [6][9][10]; \$M.

Component	Artificial lawn	Natural (serviced)	Natural (DIY)
Establishment (install / sod + labour)	\$7,750	\$1,000	\$1,000
Irrigation, 27.9 m³/season at Aurora 2026 rates	—	\$169/yr	\$169/yr
Mowing service / own equipment & time	—	\$1,200/yr (A)	time only (A)
Fertilizer, overseeding, weed control	—	\$150/yr (A)	\$150/yr (A)
Upkeep (rinse, brush, infill top-up)	\$100/yr (A)	—	—
Ten-year total	\$8,750	\$16,190	\$4,190 + time

(A) marks a stated assumption, not a sourced figure — see §M. The two natural-lawn scenarios bracket how Aurora households actually maintain grass: fully serviced care, or do-it-yourself care where the principal cost is the owner's time.

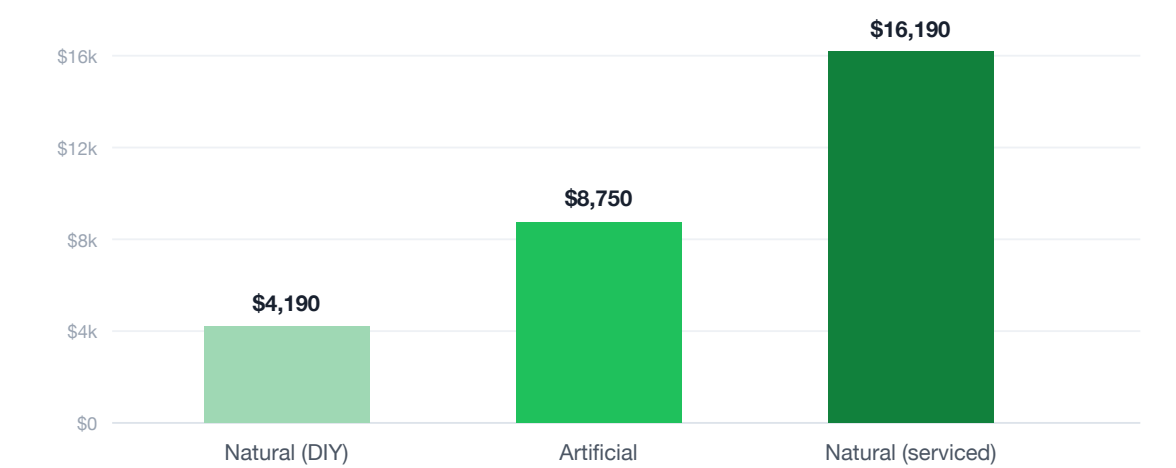


Figure 1 — Ten-year total cost of ownership for a 500 sq ft Aurora lawn under three maintenance regimes. DIY excludes the value of the owner's time. Derived from [6][9][10]; assumptions in §M.

The finding cuts both ways, and we report both: against **professionally serviced** lawn care, artificial turf is the cheaper ten-year proposition by roughly **\$7,400**; against **do-it-yourself** care, turf never catches up in cash terms — what it purchases instead is roughly 300 hours of the owner's time over the decade, a lawn that stays usable and green through Aurora's summer dry spells and watering-restriction windows.

4 The water component in Aurora

Aurora's drinking water is a blend of Lake Ontario surface water (supplied wholesale by York Region) and groundwater from Yonge Street Aquifer wells, treated with chloramine [9]. The Town bills residents directly: effective May 1, 2026, the combined rate is **\$6.06/m³** — water at \$2.78/m³ plus wastewater at \$3.28/m³ — a flat volumetric rate with no tiered block, on top of a residential basic charge of \$18.35/month [10].

Using the growing-season irrigation model described in §M (2.5 cm/week over 24 weeks on 46.45 m²), a 500 sq ft natural lawn consumes **27.9 m³ per season**, costing about **\$169/year** in water and wastewater charges at Aurora's 2026 rate.

Table 4 — Seasonal irrigation model, 500 sq ft lawn at Aurora's 2026 rate. *Derived from [10]; irrigation assumption in §M.*

Component	Value
Aurora combined rate (water + wastewater)	\$6.06/m ³
Weekly irrigation volume (2.5 cm on 46.45 m ²)	1.161 m ³
Seasonal volume (24-week growing season)	27.9 m ³
Seasonal water + wastewater cost	\$169

That figure is higher than in most GTA municipalities because Aurora's combined rate is above the regional average. Beyond the cash amount, three non-cash factors strengthen the water case for turf:

- **Restriction resilience.** Aurora's By-law 4420-03.E enforces an odd/even address system from May 15 to September 30, with outdoor municipal water use permitted only between 6–10 a.m. and 6–10 p.m. [11]. York Region may escalate to Stage 1 and Stage 2 advisories during drought. Artificial turf is indifferent to all of these.
- **Irrigation waste.** The U.S. EPA estimates that as much as 50% of outdoor irrigation water is lost to wind, evaporation and runoff [12] — water that in Aurora is billed and treated but never reaches a root.
- **No rebate offsets.** Neither the Town of Aurora nor York Region currently offers a residential lawn-replacement or xeriscape rebate; the financial case for turf rests entirely on avoided maintenance, not utility incentives [13].

LOCAL CONTEXT — AURORA'S WATERING WINDOW

Aurora's May 15 – September 30 bylaw season covers 20 of the growing season's 24 weeks [11]. The odd/even rule and the 6–10 a.m. / 6–10 p.m. windows apply to all outdoor municipal water use, including irrigation systems, hoses, sprinklers, and pool filling. New sod and seed receive a one-month grace period; newly planted trees and shrubs may be watered for 24 hours after planting.

5 Payback period and sensitivity

Figure 2 tracks cumulative cost year by year. Against serviced lawn care, the 500 sq ft reference project breaks even nearing **year five** and is roughly \$7,400 ahead by year ten. Because mowing service is largely a flat cost regardless of lawn size, smaller projects break even faster (Table 5): a 300 sq ft courtyard recovers in about 2.9 years, while a 700 sq ft project takes nearly seven.

Table 5 — Break-even vs serviced lawn care, by project size. *Derived; assumptions in \$M.*

Project	Upfront difference	Annual saving	Break-even
300 sq ft	\$4,050	\$1,419	≈2.9 years
500 sq ft	\$6,750	\$1,419	≈4.8 years
700 sq ft	\$9,450	\$1,419	≈6.7 years



Figure 2 — Cumulative ownership cost, 500 sq ft Aurora lawn, years 0–10. The artificial and serviced-natural curves cross near year five. *Derived; assumptions in \$M.*

6 What moves a quote up or down

Published ranges are wide because site conditions are. The factors Aurora installers price for:

- **Base preparation.** Excavation depth and aggregate volume dominate. York Region's heavy clay soils hold water and heave in freeze-thaw cycles, so quotes in Aurora routinely include deeper bases and drainage grading [8].
- **Access.** Established Aurora neighbourhoods often mean mature trees, narrow side yards and wheelbarrow access, raising labour hours.
- **Product tier.** Face weight, pile height and backing separate a \$10/sq ft entry product from a \$25 premium one; putting-green surfaces sit above even premium landscape turf [6][8].
- **Shape and edges.** Curves, pool coping, tree rings and planting-bed borders add cutting and seaming time.
- **Project size.** Larger areas spread fixed costs (delivery, disposal, equipment) over more square feet, lowering the unit rate [6].

M Methodology & data sources

This is a desk-research report. Published figures were collected in August 2026 from the sources listed under References: the Town of Aurora's 2026 water billing insert and water-use bylaw, York Region's outdoor water-use guidance, Environment and Climate Change Canada climate normals (Toronto Buttonville A, 1991–2020), a U.S. EPA WaterSense statistics page, and published GTA installer price guides.

Stated assumptions (not sourced facts): (i) irrigation model — an actively maintained lawn receives 2.5 cm of water per week over a 24-week southern Ontario growing season (a widely used horticultural guideline endorsed by the Region of Waterloo); (ii) mowing service \$1,200/season; (iii) fertilizer/overseed/weed control \$150/yr; (iv) turf upkeep \$100/yr; (v) sod establishment \$1,000 for 500 sq ft (material approximately \$0.80/sq ft plus site prep and laying labour); (vi) DIY time approximately 30 h/season. Derived figures combine these assumptions with the cited rates; changing any assumption changes the results — Section 5 shows the sensitivity to project size.

Limitations

Prices are published planning figures, not quotations; actual quotes vary with site conditions. The irrigation model is a guideline-based estimate — real households water differently, and Aurora's 862.4 mm of well-distributed annual precipitation [14] reduces irrigation need in normal summers. Ten-year figures are undiscounted nominal dollars. This report is not an engineering, agronomic or financial assessment of any specific property.

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