

Preparing for Spring GREENS

If you like the idea of practicing your pitching and putting on a green in your yard, spring is a great time to get started.

But a local expert warns that spring training should start in the fall. If you want a putting green installed in your yard in April, you need to start thinking about it now, says Michael Gismondi, owner of Elite Synthetic Surfaces in Jericho, N.Y.

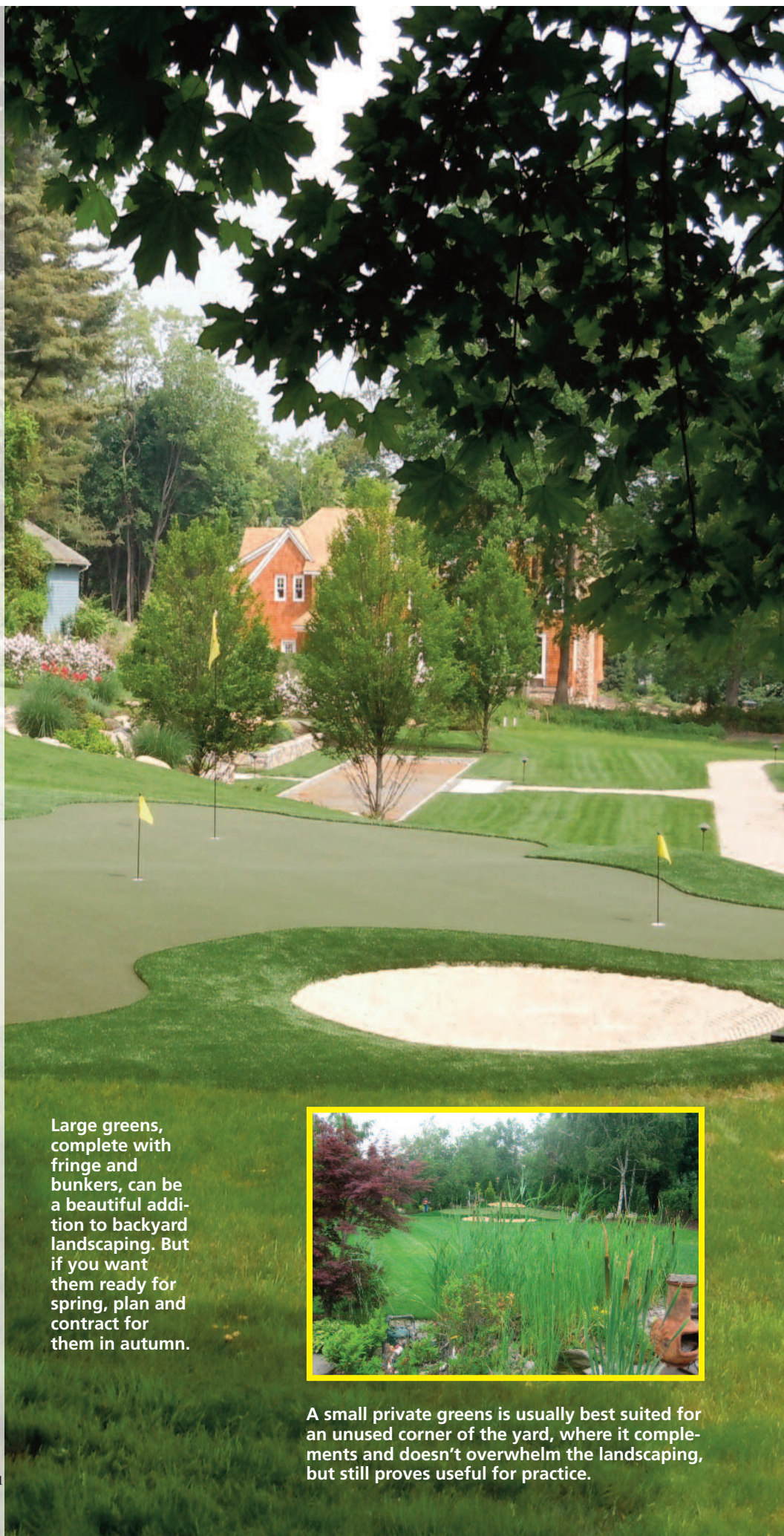
Installation bookings build up over the winter, he says. By spring, you can't expect to just call and have a green out back the next day.

"As soon as the weather breaks, we get out there and we start to work," Gismondi says. "But some installations take a week, some take two weeks. The earlier you book, the better, so that you can enjoy your green the whole summer."

Also, many contractors — Gismondi included — offer specials for people who book in autumn.

Another benefit to planning early is that you can have a consultation months before the installation, leaving you lots of time to contemplate your options. "If you're picking out an area in your yard, we can give you ideas for what's possible there," Gismondi says. "If we don't think that area is good for a green, then we can give you ideas for other spots. Either way, over the winter you have lots of time to decide what suits you best."

One aspect of green installation that usually surprises Gismondi's clients is how large it does not have to be. "People think these greens have got to be big with bunkers and things like that," he says. "But you can put a nice little green off of the patio — just a small putting green that is conversational or just for practice. In fact, most of the golf pros I work with use just a small green they can practice on at home. ♦



Large greens, complete with fringe and bunkers, can be a beautiful addition to backyard landscaping. But if you want them ready for spring, plan and contract for them in autumn.



A small private greens is usually best suited for an unused corner of the yard, where it complements and doesn't overwhelm the landscaping, but still proves useful for practice.