



PROJECT SUMMARY

Home Depot Backyard at Mercedes-Benz Stadium

HORTICULTURALIST

Steve Ware
Campus Horticulturalist/Facility
Management for the Georgia
World Congress Center

PRODUCTS USED

Profile Porous Ceramic
(PPC) Greens Grade

PROFILE SOLVES TURF DILEMMA FOR ATLANTA'S HOME DEPOT BACKYARD

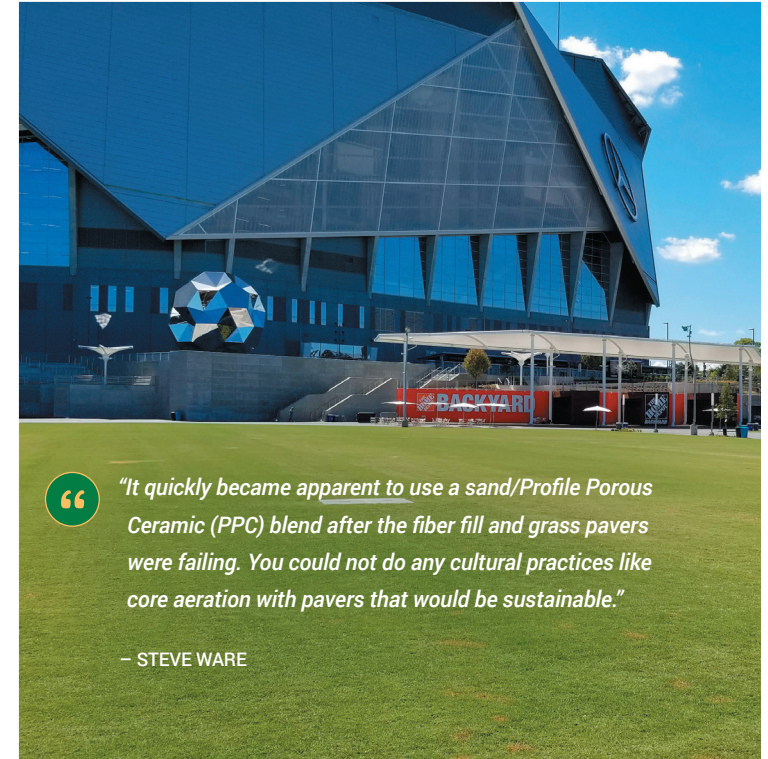
Opened in September 2018, the Home Depot Backyard is an impressive 11-acre greenspace located at the new Mercedes-Benz Stadium, home to the NFL's Atlanta Falcons. The versatile space is available for a range of activities such as football tailgating events, as well as arts, culture, health and wellness programs.

The space is also home to a flexible sports field space, playgrounds, walking and biking paths, and a dual-level shaded pavilion deck. The location will quickly become one of Atlanta's most unique gathering spots and a go-to tailgating location for Falcon home games.

With tailgating in mind, the creation of the Home Depot Backyard required an engineering and development plan from Kimley-Horn that allowed for the growth of stunning grass that could withstand substantial foot and heavy vehicle traffic. Steve Ware, Campus Horticulturalist/Facility Management for the Georgia World Congress Center, manages over 220 acres of landscape in the state of Georgia, and understands the unique challenges of the site. Ware enlisted natural-grass industry experts such as Dr. Clint Waltz, who spent more than a year with the design team to determine the best approach for this site.

CHALLENGES

The concept of an 11-acre greenspace that could serve as a tailgating location for the city's dedicated fans was nothing short of exciting, but it presented a unique challenge: how can you grow natural grass that offers a professional look, quality and feel, while being able to endure regular heavy foot and vehicle traffic?



In August 2016, the team developed a mock-up of three different options for the Home Depot Backyard—one grass paver product (a honeycomb-shaped pavement product), another fiber fill, and one rootzone blend of sand and Profile Porous Ceramic (PPC) Greens Grade. Each option was put through extensive testing to determine which approach would withstand the anticipated traffic.



"We relied heavily on the expertise of the team at Profile Products to fully communicate the benefits of using their porous ceramic in the root zone."

— STEVE WARE

THE SOLUTION

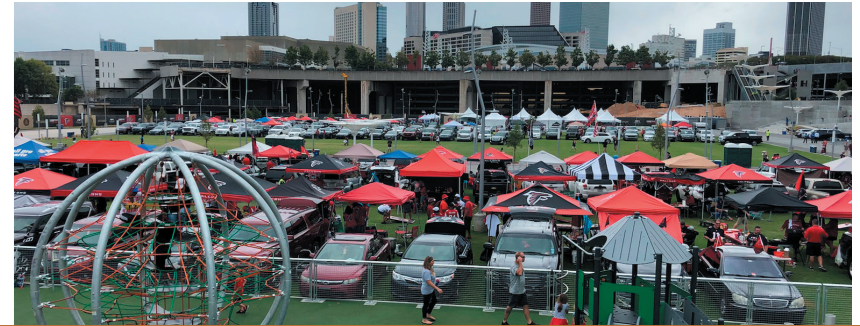
The testing results determined that the sand-based rootzone using Profile Porous Ceramic (PPC) was the best option, and Ware further reinforced this recommendation based upon the success of the same solution that worked on the Centennial Olympic Park's South Lawn project.

With that knowledge, John Maeder, Business Manager at Profile, worked with the entire Home Depot Backyard team to explain the science behind natural grass and the Profile rootzone specifications.

"The folks at Home Depot Backyard were turf guys; they understood what they needed the grass to do, but I came in to showcase what the PPC product would mean in terms of how the grass grows and what the long-term benefits would be," added Maeder.

Profile's PPC product blended with sand in a greens mix can improve water- and nutrient-holding capabilities, increase oxygen levels at the root zone, and facilitate drainage when soils are saturated. The mixture allows for impressive grow-in—after a 60-day grow-in period, the grass at the Home Depot Backyard grew in perfectly, just in time for the big opening in September 2018—and provides long-term maintenance benefits.

With healthy roots, the grass at the Home Depot Backyard boasts improved moisture management and the turf is less prone to disease and other problems. Perhaps most critically, the PPC soil amendment is proven to resist compaction and eliminate localized dry spot, allowing the Backyard to serve its purpose as the tailgating home of the Atlanta Falcons.



"The cultural practice of being able to aerate and physically make holes in the grass will make maintaining the turf much easier. The Backyard is expected to handle the regular traffic, but it's still going to require work to help it recover each time."

— STEVE WARE

RESULTS

Now, the Home Depot Backyard is fully capable of withstanding the roughly 700 cars driving and parking on the grass every weekend, and the team is confident in its ability to not only hold up, but look great.

The solution offered by Profile delivers a sustainable turfgrass that is more consistent to maintain in the long term.

With football season in full swing, the solution used at The Home Depot Backyard is proving to be a huge success. The Backyard survived its first event of heavy foot and car traffic, with impressive grass still in place at the end.