

TEERING OFF

YOUR OWN PUTTING GREEN COULD BE JUST AROUND THE CORNER, WRITES GREG NINNESS

Many people like the idea of a home built on or around a golf course. Major developments such as Kinloch on the shores of Lake Taupo and Gulf Harbour north of Auckland are proof of the concept's popularity.

You do not have to spend millions of dollars to have a slice of golfing heaven in your own back yard, thanks to top New Zealand golfer Phil Taturangi.

Taturangi and a group of New Zealand and Australian businessmen are behind a company called Southwest Greens NZ Ltd, which installs chipping and putting greens in private properties. The greens can be made to any size and level of complexity, according to the amount of space available and the size of the budget.

Southwest Greens sales manager Arthur Parkin says the company installed its first green a year ago and has since put them into 32 properties, all of them around private residences.

The average size is about 50sq m, costing \$10,000-\$12,000 to install, but a mini one can be installed for as little as \$3500.

And almost any site is suitable. The company has even had a request to install one on the roof of an apartment building.

Most sections have a seldom-used area, perhaps an oddly shaped patch or a difficult corner that still needs to be maintained. Installing a golf green turns the space into a productive area requiring very little maintenance, Parkin says.

Keen golfers use the greens to practise chipping and putting to improve their game, but they are also a great way of getting the kids outside for a bit of recreation and an ideal way of entertaining friends, he said.

Taturangi came across the concept while in the United States recuperating from an injury. Whenever he visited his professional golfing buddies, he noticed they had the



greens installed in their grounds so that they could practise whenever they wished.

He made inquiries and found the greens were developed for installation on golf courses in the arid south-



ABOVE: Transform an unloved corner of the section and improve your game at the same time

LEFT: Phil Taturangi

western states of the US, where there could be difficulties supplying the amount of water required by traditional grass greens.

The greens use a synthetic turf but, just as importantly, this is laid over a high-tech substrate, which means the ball bounces and rolls in the same way as it would on grass.

Parkin explains that preparation means excavating the ground where the green is to be laid and laying a compacted aggregate base. This is covered with a rubber compound shock pad, which ensures the ball lands as it would on a golf course. The top layer is made of sand and synthetic turf, which is rolled, brushed and sanded several times until the right consistency is achieved.

The final step is fringing the green with chipping turf.

Most people opt for a fairly simple small green, but those with larger sections or lifestyle blocks can have them contoured or add extra features, such as bunkers.

"But for most people it's a way of taking a small, awkward area that's a pain to maintain and getting some value from it," says Parkin.

– Further information is available at www.southwestgreens.co.nz