



Just off Highway 5 in Waconia, Overby installed this green with 1,800 square feet of putting turf, 1,200 square feet of fringe grass, a 14-by-12-foot bunker, and three tee boxes for 60-, 30-, and 20-yard approach shots.



WOODS, IRONS, LEVEL

One man's quest for the perfect backyard putting green.

It seemed like a good idea. Bob Overby, a securities broker with Oak Ridge Financial in Golden Valley and a devoted golfer, decided he'd put a natural-turf putting green in his yard.

Then he checked with the United States Golf Association to learn how it's done: eight layers of substrate for drainage and contouring, treatments with fungicide, an "unbelievable amount of water," mowing nearly every day. They suggested artificial turf "unless you want a full-time job taking care of this," Overby says. "Their statistics are that people who built greens based on their specs, 80 percent of them were torn up by the third year."

He checked on synthetic options. The demonstration greens he saw looked like they'd been "glued down to patio. There was no undulation, they didn't look like golf greens."

Then Overby found his solution—and a side business designing and installing putting greens for other people's yards. The Mirage synthetic turf he used in his own backyard goes over a base of class-five limestone and sand. Overby says a typical putting green might be designed with 40 different elevation points. He got some training from Las Vegas-based Mirage in how to build the greens when he decided to become a licensed distributor of their turf. Mostly though, he's self-taught, and his moonlighting gig as founder of Rosemount-based Michelangelo Putting Greens has changed his golf game.

"I keep a level in my golf bag," Overby says, "and I'm constantly—when I see something that I like on a nice golf course—taking measurements out there."

—D. L.