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In a desert climate, like parts of Arizona, 100% turf doesn't make sense.

Northeast U.S. states are well-suited for lawns.

RIGHT PLANT, WRONG PLACE?

Location is one of the most important factors concerning proper turf use and care.

"The Northeast is one of the ... regions in the country that is actually well-suited to lawns," The New Yorker reports in "Turf War."

But "if you live in a desert climate, like parts of Arizona, for example, 100% turf doesn't make sense," explains Gina Zirkle, a scientist and environmental stewardship expert with The Scotts Miracle-Gro Co., based in Marysville, OH. "When looking at precipitation and temperature maps of the U.S., most areas of the country can support turfgrass growth with minimal inputs. In other areas of the country with high temperatures and little precipitation, other green plants and groundcovers adaptable to those conditions may be a better choice."

As a result, when it comes to legislators attempting to limit inputs, such as water, location also needs to factor into the equation. "You can't nationalize regional viewpoints," points out Andy Smith, national accounts manager with Reinke Manufacturing Co., Deshler, NE, and former external affairs director for the Irrigation Association.

"Natural turfgrass is a plant and therefore any 'one size fits all' approach by regulators is not feasible," adds T. Kirk Hunter, executive director of Turfgrass Producers International, East Dundee, IL. "With many spe-

cies of turfgrass and varying climates around the country, programs like the EPA's 'Water Sense,' which mandates a limit of 40% turfgrass in a home lawn, don't make any sense. This is supposed to work for a lawn in Phoenix and Seattle, where the annual precipitation between the two locations varies from a mere 8 in. in Phoenix to 36 in. in Seattle."

Instead, they should be "providing a reasonable allocation for landscape water use and creating a pricing structure around it to make it fair for everybody," Smith suggests.

"There are times, places and situations where particular types of turfgrass and turf management practices may not be appropriate," explains Ranajit Sahu, a Southern California-based university professor, in his report *Think Before You Remove Your Lawn — The Benefits of Turfgrass*. "But getting rid of all turfgrasses everywhere is not the answer.

"Optimization starts with proper selection of turfgrasses suitable for specific climate regions and includes proper and appropriate cultural practices for turf maintenance, including optimized watering and cuttings management, sparing pesticide use and judicious use of technology," he continues. "This requires careful consideration and weighing of the site and case-specific values of turfgrass, both positive and negative." — NW