



Frances Tophill's Show Garden:

Sustainability with GravelGuard

CASE STUDY

With sustainability being the key theme for 2022's BBC Gardeners' World Live at the NEC in Birmingham, Frances Tophill, well known horticulturist, author and television presenter for BBC Gardeners' World, had set her sights on making her debut show garden at the event "as sustainable as it possibly can be".



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THE PROJECT

Show Garden at BBC Gardeners' World Live '22

THE BRIEF

Recycled material gravel stabilisation tile to cope with high foot traffic.

THE SOLUTION

ACO GravelGuard Eco tiles

100% Recycled

To demonstrate how gardens do not need to sacrifice looks for sustainability, Frances' garden design centred around a Bauhaus, post-industrial look, with many of its features like the greenhouse and tin shed built with recycled materials. Alongside the constructed elements, many of the plants in the garden were chosen for their usefulness to humans. These included shade-loving plants, climbing fruits, vegetables and herbs, and a turf suited to wildlife that helps protect biodiversity.

Tying the entire aesthetic together was a recycled aggregate pathway, which meandered from the entrance through to the centre of the garden. A key challenge for Rupert was ensuring that this aggregate was stabilised and did not migrate when walked on by the visitors to the show. Additionally, the solution had to meet the sustainability theme and be easy to install.

Oliver Collins, Product Marketing Manager at ACO House & Garden, suggested the use of ACO's GravelGuard Grey Eco modular tiles. Commenting on the project, Oliver said: "When Rupert came to us for advice, we knew instantly that GravelGuard would be best suited for the application. Our suggestion was to use the Grey Eco version, as it matched the natural-coloured gravel and design.

Rupert Keys, Managing Director at Keyscape Landscape Design & Construction and founder of landscape training company TASK Academy, along with Ruth Gwynn Associates, landscape architect, garden designer and horticulturist, were handed the mission of delivering Frances' vision, and constructing her eventual award-winning garden. With a strict remit of using only locally sourced, recycled and reclaimed materials where possible, Rupert turned to ACO House & Garden for advice on how this could be achieved when stabilising the recycled aggregate around the space.





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“More importantly, it is made from 100% recycled polypropylene and is specifically designed to prevent gravel from moving, making it ideal for driveways, paths and shed bases. Thanks to its integrated membrane, it can prevent weeds taking root as the garden matures, while its geo-textile design speeds up installation. This was a key requisite of the project given the tight turnaround times facing Frances and Rupert.”

Two pallets of GravelGuard were delivered to Rupert in Birmingham. With a total of 34 tiles and 61m² coverage, the installation took only one day.

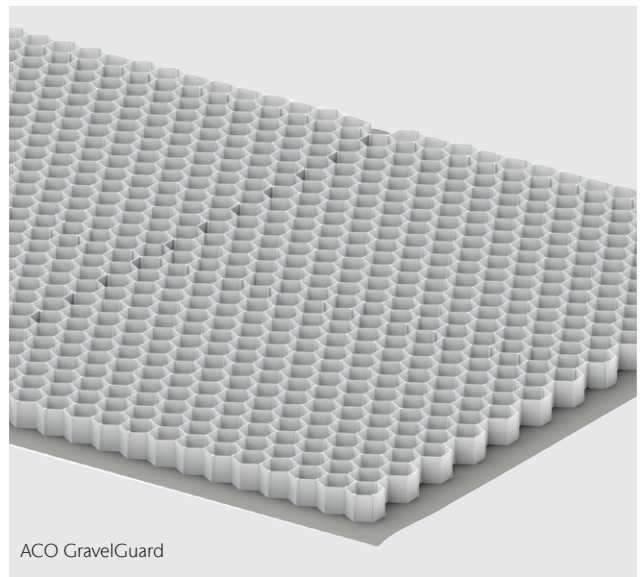
Award-Winning Design Underpinned with Simplicity

With its challenging and thought-provoking design, along with its commitment to BBC Gardeners’ World Live’s sustainability theme, Frances Tophill was awarded a Platinum Medal and also Best Show Garden.

On the project, Rupert said, “This has been one of our most challenging briefs yet, given how almost everything had to be sustainably sourced or produced. We were very thankful to the team at ACO for their expertise and knowledge. The GravelGuard Grey Eco solution was delivered fast and on time, while the product itself was easy to handle and install, making this part of the project quick and simple.”

After the show, elements of the garden were donated by Frances to Foleshill Community Centre, which has a community garden to grow produce used to cook or give to members of the social supermarket they have set up. As well as this, the charity has set up a thriving well-being programme, including yoga, craft, food days and gardening sessions.

For more information about GravelGuard and ACO, please visit www.aco.co.uk/products/gravelguard



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