Time-tested
A Case Study On One Of The First U.S. Gator Base Jobs
Skepticism.

It was one of the most challenging obstacles to overcome when Gator Base was first launched in 2013. The traditional way of installing pavers had worked for hundreds of years and many contractors firmly believed there wasn’t a reason to go and reinvent the wheel. The list of objections was long. “There’s no way a ¾” piece of polypropylene could replace 6” of compacted crushed stone.” “I can’t see this product ever holding up in the kind of freeze/thaw cycles we experience here.” “I don’t believe I’d really be saving anything by using Gator Base.”

And then there were the few who decided to try it out. One of these daring contractors was Patrick Donovan, owner of Classic Landscaping in Edison, NJ. Eager to utilize revolutionary products and stay ahead of the curve, Patrick installed one of the very first Gator Base jobs in the U.S. In this case study, we’ll explore the details of this project and how it’s holding up three years later.

Gator Base launched in Fall 2013. By early 2017, 2 million sq. ft. had been installed!
About

Before we begin, we’d like to introduce you to Patrick Donovan. After serving 27 years as a Police Officer for the Port Authority of NY and NJ, Patrick ventured into the business of landscaping and snow removal. In 1983 he started Classic Landscaping, a full-service landscaping company specializing in design, installation, and maintenance for commercial properties. Patrick is a member of several industry-related associations and holds a variety of professional certifications including ICPI and NCMA. He is also a contributing writer for numerous trade publications.

Patrick Donovan
Owner, Classic Landscaping

“More profit ... half the work ... half the time ... a no-brainer if you ask me!”

-Patrick Donovan on Gator Base
Patrick first discovered Gator Base when it debuted at the 2013 GIE EXPO in Kentucky. Like many of the contractors who visited the Alliance booth that year, he had his doubts about this brand new product. Interested in learning more, he eventually reached out to his local sales rep, Kevin Minton.

“I have a great working relationship with Kevin and truly value his knowledge and his honesty. I was skeptical at first but, when I realized Alliance had the technical data to support this new idea, I decided it was worth a try. In my book, if Kevin says it works, it works!”
The Job

In 2014, the perfect opportunity to use Gator Base presented itself. A very small working area combined with a buried utility surprise called for some creativity on a New Jersey job site, which Patrick describes here:

“... the mark-outs for utilities were located dead center in the middle of our dig ... this meant we couldn’t use an excavator. Now our plans had to change.”

“I had a client who was in desperate need of a walkway at their world headquarters in New Jersey. Prior to the installation, employees and corporate guests had to traverse a haphazard stone path in order to enter the building. The creation of the walkway would not only enhance the corporate image of this facility but, more importantly, provide a safer environment for pedestrians.”

“The circumstances turned out to be quite unique. Originally we had planned for the traditional, ICPI recommended method of installation. However, to our surprise, we found the mark-outs for utilities were located dead center in the middle of our dig. This was a first! In every installation we had ever performed, the gas line always ran from the street to the building, usually in a straight line under the curb/sidewalk/driveway etc.”

“In the state of New Jersey, you’re required to hand dig 2’ on both sides of a utility line. Given the small working space of the entire project (totaling 3’x75’), this meant we couldn’t use an excavator. Now our plans had to change. I called Kevin and explained the situation. During our conversation we both agreed that Gator Base was the solution.”
The Installation

The characteristics of this job site could have created the perfect storm. But with Gator Base, the installation was able to go off without a hitch. We asked Patrick how things went and here’s what he had to say …

What would you say was the greatest benefit of using Gator Base on this particular job site?

“I could have spent a ton of time hand digging this site to get the same results that Gator Base gave us with half the effort. More profit … half the work … half the time … a no brainer if you ask me!”

So it sounds like Gator Base saved you some time and money …

“The only material trucked to the site was the very little sand needed for the installation. The Gator Base was lightweight and incredibly easy to transport and unload, unlike stone. (It was also very easy for us to store before the job. We didn’t have to worry about big bins of stone, equipment for loading, or even storage space at the site. A win, win, win!)”

“While we used the same sized crew as we normally do, the project was completed in half the time we had anticipated!”

“Lastly, the site had a use for the red stone we removed. So the benefit of not having to truck off any material at all was priceless.”
Three Years Later ...

Shortly after completing the Gator Base sidewalk project, Patrick recalls talking to a very prominent figure in the industry who asked him, “Do you really think that [Gator Base] is going to take the place of 4-6” of stone? Talk to me in three years and let’s see how it is.”

Well, it’s now three years later and Patrick is proud to report that absolutely nothing has moved or settled on the job.

“It’s still solid as a rock! And that prominent figure is now touting the use of Gator Base, by the way.”
Not only is Patrick pleased with the project results all these years later but, so is his client. Chris Morrison of Camin Cargo Controls was eager to share his experience working with Classic Landscaping and to give us an update on how the sidewalk is doing today:

"Approximately three years ago, our company sought out a reputable contractor to landscape and hardscape the front of our commercial office. We wanted to add a walkway for employees and visitors plus give the building some much needed curb appeal. After meeting several landscape/hardscape contractors, we made the decision to move forward with Classic Landscaping. Although we had some concerns with hardscaping the front of a large brick commercial building, Pat Donovan and his team at Classic Landscaping gave us the confidence needed to move forward with our project. Pat brought samples of the products to be used and explained the detailed preparation that was involved to ensure years of trouble-free service."

"When it came time to start the project, Classic Landscaping came out to survey the area and check the soil where the hardscaping would be installed. From there, we discussed the estimated length of time for completion and ironed out the final details of the project. Pat sent us a detailed drawing of how the project would look when completed as well as a booklet with all of the pertinent information about the project itself, including the products used. As soon as weather permitted, Classic came out to install the hardscape and plant the landscaping. To say I was impressed with the level of professionalism they demonstrated would be an understatement. Classic arrived with a clean and nicely outfitted work truck, had all of the necessary permits, safety gear, tools, and a positive attitude. The Classic team worked very quickly and methodically to install the hardscaping during the week. Along the way I went out to check on progress several times and each time someone from Classic would explain why each step in the preparation was so crucial to having a solid finished product."

"The total project was completed in a week, which was quicker than anticipated (especially due to the heat wave we had during those few days). After three years, the hardscape looks as good as it did the day it was finished. It has held up to weather extremes, flooding, and lots of foot traffic and still looks amazing. Not only were the employees very happy with the new appearance of our building and the added safety the new walkway provided, but our neighbors even went as far as writing letters to compliment the beauty we added to the block with the work we did out front. We would not hesitate to recommend Classic Landscaping, or the products they use, to anyone."

“It has held up to weather extremes, flooding, and lots of foot traffic and still looks amazing.”
-Cris Morrison, Camin Cargo Controls
Recap

Time-tested. Gator Base is a revolutionary product that will expedite the installation process, save you time and money, and hold up to harsh freeze/thaw cycles.

To see live footage of the Classic Landscaping sidewalk installation, check out the YouTube video!