



# Lawn to Garden Rebate Program FAQs

*The conservation programs we offer support a sustainable water supply. Remaining persistent in our conservation efforts, by taking advantage of rebates and resources, protects and preserves for our future.*

## **How much is the rebate?**

The rebate is \$1.00 per square foot of lawn replaced. The maximum rebate is \$1,000 for single-family residential sites, and \$20,000 for multifamily, commercial, and institutional sites. Eligible customers may participate one time per rebated area and cannot exceed the maximum allowed rebate.

## **Do I have to pay taxes on my rebate?**

The IRS requires DWD to issue 1099 forms to individuals and companies that receive \$600 or more in rebates in a calendar year. Legislation is currently stalled in Congress to treat water conservation rebates the same as they do the tax-free energy efficiency rebates, and we will update this page if this tax change becomes law.

## **Who is eligible to participate?**

The Lawn to Garden Rebate Program is available to single family, multifamily, and commercial, customers who use water for their landscape through a metered service with Diablo Water District. The applicant's water account must be in good standing.

## **I have already started my project. Can I get a rebate?**

No. The Program is not retroactive. Projects underway or completed prior to receiving a DWD Notice to Proceed are not eligible as the rebate is designed as an incentive to get people to remove their lawn that they might not otherwise have done.

## **What lawn areas are eligible for the Program?**

Lawn areas to be converted must be front yards or publicly accessible areas easily visible to the general public. Backyards, or areas that are not visible to the public, are not eligible.

## **What plants can I use in my water-efficient landscape?**

Plants must be low water needing and adaptable to our local climate. Plants must be listed on the [DWD Approved Plant List](#). Plants not found on this list will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

## **Can I receive a rebate for replacing my lawn completely with artificial turf?**

No. Artificial turf and rubber mulch are not eligible for this rebate and cannot be included in the area approved for conversion.

## **Can I receive a rebate for installing a concrete patio, walkway, or an extension to my driveway?**

Yes. Concrete and other non-permeable surfaces may be used but **cannot make up more than 20%** of the total area to be rebated. Permeable hardscapes (which allow water to soak into the soil) such as gravel, brick, pavers, or flagstone with permeable, mortar-less material for grout (such as sand and gravel) can make up a larger percentage of your project, but the conversion area must still meet the fifty percent (50%) living Plant Cover requirement.

## **Can I receive a rebate if I already let my lawn die due to the drought?**

Yes. Lawn areas proposed to be converted must be currently maintained. Brown lawns due to drought-related watering reductions will also be accepted. However, dirt areas that show no signs of the presence of a lawn are not eligible.

**Can I receive a rebate for replacing high water use plants other than lawn?**

No. The Program only credits lawns that are removed.

**What is mulch and why is it required?**

Mulch deters weeds, reduces the amount of water that evaporates from the soil, acts as an insulating layer, and keeps the soil cooler in summer. The most common types of mulch are bark chips, shredded bark, and wood chips. Rock or decomposed granite can also be used. Organic mulch breaks down and adds nutrients to the soil. The program requires that converted areas have a minimum of two inches (2") of mulch in all planting areas.

**What is the 50% Plant Cover requirement?**

Upon completion, and continuing for the five-year term of the agreement, converted areas must contain enough plants, planted in the ground, to cover at least 50% of the converted area with living plants once the plants are fully grown. To determine if your plan will meet this requirement, check the mature growth size for each plant used. Example: Retrofitting a 1,000 square foot lawn must contain a sufficient number of plants so that at maturity, the plants cover at least 500 square feet.

**Can I keep my existing lawn sprinklers to water my new garden?**

No. The existing lawn sprinklers in the converted area must be removed. Any lawn areas remaining outside the converted area must be irrigated separately from the new landscape.

**What type of irrigation system do I need to use?**

Participants have two options for irrigating their new landscape, but drip irrigation is the preferred method:

- 1) The District encourages participants to install a new drip irrigation system equipped with a pressure regulator, filter and pressure compensating emitters. Drip is the most efficient way to irrigate plants, trees, and shrubs.
- 2) Participants can choose to hand-water their new landscape and not install a drip system. However, this is not encouraged as it is more difficult to establish plants and maintain uniform moisture, as well as generally uses more water.

**What if I only convert part of my lawn?**

If only part of the lawn is converted, the remaining lawn must be irrigated separately (i.e., on its own valve) from the new landscape, and the sprinkler system for the lawn must be modified to eliminate overspray onto the new landscaped area.

**Do I need to change my irrigation controller to be eligible?**

The District does not require any specific controller or controller features, but highly recommends using a controller that has multiple programs (i.e., schedules). This way the new low water needing plants can be watered less frequently than other plants in your yard. This will allow you to achieve maximum water savings and plant health in your yard.

Visit [www.diablowater.org](http://www.diablowater.org) or call 925-625-6587 for more information.