

Lose Your Lawn, Gain a 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 \$2,000 for residential sites and \$20,000 for non-residential* customers. Eligible customers may participate once per rebated area, and the rebate cannot exceed the maximum allowable rebate. This program allows only one conversion per site (front and back).

- a. *Non-residential customers are eligible in accordance with the Nonfunctional Turf Ban (AB 1572) as follows:

Implementation Date	Customer Type	Deadline for Program Completion
January 1, 2027	Properties owned or leased by the Department of General Services (state government) and other state and local government properties	June 1, 2027
January 1, 2028	Commercial, industrial, and institutional properties, including business parks, hospitals, educational campuses, and similar locations	June 1, 2028
January 1, 2029	Common areas of homeowners' associations (HOAs), common interest developments, and community service organizations or similar entities	June 1, 2029

Do I have to pay taxes on my rebate?

The IRS requires the District to issue 1099 forms to customers receiving \$600 or more in rebates in a calendar year. All approved program participants must submit a completed IRS W-9 form to the District after their site inspection and before receiving their rebate, regardless of the rebate amount. Currently, legislation that would treat water conservation rebates like tax-free energy efficiency rebates is stalled in Congress. We will update this page if this tax change becomes law.

Who is eligible to participate?

The Lose Your Lawn, Gain a Garden Program is available to residential and non-residential customers (as noted above) who use water for their landscape through a metered service with Diablo Water District. The applicant's water account must be in good standing.

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I belong to an HOA – am I eligible to participate?

According to California Civil Code Section 4735, a homeowner's association (HOA) may not prohibit a homeowner from installing a water-wise landscape. An HOA may apply landscaping rules if they conform with the law. Please check with your HOA regulations to ensure you are also meeting their requirements.

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 *District 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 have otherwise done.

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 *District Approved Plant List*. Plants not found on this list will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Plant seeds are not eligible for approval or rebate.

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

No. Artificial turf, rubber mulch, and plastic sheeting 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, mortarless 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?

Lawn areas proposed to be converted must be currently irrigated and have been actively maintained within the previous 12 months.

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.

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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.gov or call (925) 625-6587 for more information.