

## **BAWSCA Lawn Be Gone! Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

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

The rebate is fifty cents (\$0.50) per square foot of lawn replaced. The maximum rebate for residential single-family sites is \$500 and for multi-family residential and non-residential sites is \$3,000. Rebates may be issued in the form of a check or a credit on the Applicant's water account.

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

The Program is available to residential and nonresidential customers (Applicants) who purchase water from a participating BAWSCA Member Agency. A list of participating Member Agencies for Fiscal Year 2010-2011 and their contact information can be found on the BAWSCA website ([www.BAWSCA.org](http://www.BAWSCA.org)). The Applicant's accounts must be distinctly metered to allow for evaluation of water savings. The Applicant's water account must be in good standing.

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

Lawn areas to be converted must be front yards or areas visible to the general public from sidewalks or walkways. No backyards or areas that are not visible to the public are eligible. One of the goals of the Program is to provide visible examples of water-efficient landscapes to the community.

Lawn areas to be converted must be maintained and in healthy condition, and be irrigated by a sprinkler system in good working condition. The lawn area must be irrigated with water from the potable water system (i.e., not with private wells or recycled water).

A minimum of 200 square feet of lawn must be converted. Smaller projects will be considered if they eliminate 100% of the front, or publically-visible lawn on the Applicant's property.

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

Plants that are installed in the converted area must be on the BAWSCA Approved Plant List, which can be found on the BAWSCA website ([www.BAWSCA.org](http://www.BAWSCA.org)). Plants that are not on the list may be accepted on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the participating BAWSCA Member Agency.

### **I already replaced my lawn with water-efficient plants. Can I get a rebate?**

No. The program is not retroactive and cannot provide rebates for projects that were started prior to receiving a Notice To Proceed letter from a participating BAWSCA Member Agency. The Program is intended to provide an incentive to retrofit existing lawns.

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

No. Artificial turf is not eligible for a rebate. The BAWSCA agencies have made this decision for the following reasons: (1) Artificial turf does not last forever and ultimately has to be disposed of in a landfill, (2) Artificial turf does not provide habitat for any living species, and (3) Concerns have been raised about the environmental impacts of artificial turf on underlying soil and groundwater, as well the health impacts as to individuals who play on the artificial turf.

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

No. The program does not allow non-permeable hardscape. However, permeable hardscape, such as gravel, brick or flagstone with permeable, mortar-less materials for grout lines (such as sand and gravel) are allowed in up to 50 percent of the converted area. The remainder of the converted area must be covered in live plants.

**Can I receive a rebate for replacing an existing dead lawn?**

No. The purpose of the Program is to reduce existing water demand. Lawn areas to be removed must be currently maintained and in healthy condition, and be irrigated by a sprinkler system in good working order. The lawn area must be irrigated with water from the potable water system (i.e., not with private wells or recycled water).

**Can I receive a rebate for replacing my high water use lawn with low water use lawn?**

No. This Program provides incentive to convert lawns to alternative types of water-efficient landscaping, including trees, shrubs, groundcovers and native bunch grasses. One of the goals of the Program is to provide visible examples of water-efficient landscapes that can be alternatives to lawns.

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

No. The Program only credits the lawn that is removed.

**How do I get rid of my existing Lawn?**

There are many ways that you can remove an existing lawn. Manual Removal is one of the fastest ways to kill grass and requires no toxic chemicals. Methods of manual removal vary but commonly include the use of a spade or a sod cutter. The sheets of removed sod can be discarded or laid out in the sun to dry before being added to a compost bin. Smothering is another way. Entire lawns can be killed at once by smothering. Two major options can be used. First, you can harness the heat of the sun by covering the grass with a plastic sheet weighed down on the edges. The heat of the sun and the lack of water will bake the grass and kill it over the course of two to three months. Alternatively, if you want to plant over the grass immediately, use newspaper. Place a layer of newspaper sheets, overlapping and four to five sheets thick, over the grass followed by 6 to 8 inches of compost or topsoil. The underlying grass will die and you can plant new vegetation immediately in the compost layer.

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

The most common types of mulch are bark chips, shredded bark and wood chips. Non-organic materials, such as rock or decomposed granite, can also be used as mulch. Mulch will reduce the amount of water that evaporates from the soil. It also acts as an insulating layer, keeping the soil cooler in the summer. Finally, mulch keeps the weeds down. The Program requires that converted areas have a minimum of three inches (3") of mulch in all planting areas.

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**What is the 50 Percent Plant Cover Rule?**

Converted areas must contain enough plants to cover at least 50 percent of the converted area with living plant cover when the plants are fully grown. To determine if your landscape plan will meet this requirement, check the mature growth size for each plant you are using. For example, a 1,000 square foot converted area must contain a sufficient number of plants such that, at maturity, the plants cover at least 500 square feet.

**Why is there a 50 Percent Plant Cover Rule?**

The primary goal of the Program is to reduce water use by removing water-thirsty lawns. However, this Program also encourages the use of water-efficient landscaping to maintain aesthetically pleasing and sustainable landscaping. Trees, shrubs and groundcovers provide shade, absorb carbon dioxide, supply oxygen, reduce soil erosion, give wildlife a home, decrease energy use, reduce storm water, and save water.

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

An irrigation system is not required in the converted area. An existing sprinkler irrigation system in the converted area must be removed, capped in place, or converted to a low volume drip. A new irrigation system installed in the converted area must be low volume drip, equipped with proper backflow prevention, a rainfall shutoff valve, a pressure regulator, filter and pressure compensating emitters. The irrigation system in the converted area must be in good working order, and free of leaks and malfunctions. If only part of a lawn area is converted, the converted area must be irrigated on a separate valve from the remaining lawn. The sprinkler system for the remaining lawn must be modified to only irrigate the remaining lawn area and may not spray onto the converted area.

**How many times can I apply for the rebate?**

Eligible customers may participate one time per water account.

**What would it Mean if I Allowed by Converted Landscape to be Showcased?**

If you elect to allow your converted landscape to be showcased, what that would mean the following things:

- You may be asked to display signage in your yard indicating that yours is a water-efficient landscape that participated in the Lawn Be Gone! Program.
- Pictures of your landscape may be posted on BAWSCA's website or your water agencies website to promote the Lawn Be Gone! Program.
- Pictures of your landscape may be used in promotional materials for the Lawn be Gone! Program by BAWSCA and/or your water agency.
- You may be asked if your garden may be included in a local garden tour.
- Your address may be listed next to a picture of your garden to BAWSCA's or your water agencies website so that other interested parties may view the landscape in person.

**Call 650-349-3000 or visit [www.BAWSCA.org](http://www.BAWSCA.org) for more information.**