

Artificial Turf

Through the Lawn Be Gone! Rebate Program, the Bay Area Water Supply & Conservation Agency is helping to promote water conservation while at the same time encouraging the installation of healthy, sustainable landscapes that will enhance our local environment. BAWSCA and its member agencies are not only responsible for safe, clean drinking water; we are also stewards of our entire watershed and have designed our program to go beyond simply saving water.

While artificial turf requires less water than a natural turf lawn, there are healthier and more ecologically sound alternatives that we would like to promote. For the following reasons, artificial turf is not included in our Lawn Be Gone! Rebate Program.

Artificial turf is not a living landscape and does not:

- ✓ Increase biodiversity of plant, animal and insect populations;
- ✓ Provide habitat for local fauna;
- ✓ Foster healthy soils (healthy soils increase moisture holding capacity, support healthy microbes and insects, filter pollutants and improve water quality);
- ✓ Cool surrounding air temperatures (artificial turf can get significantly hotter than surrounding air temperatures, contributing to the heat island effect by increasing air temperatures in urban settings);
- ✓ Sequester carbon or produce oxygen like living plant material can

Artificial turf is not water free

- ✓ For sanitation purposes, water is needed to periodically clean the turf. Chemicals may also be needed occasionally.
- ✓ Because artificial turf can get very hot in direct sunlight, water is sometimes needed to cool the turf before it can be used comfortably.



Artificial turf has potential environmental concerns

- ✓ Runoff from artificial turf may contain pollutants like heavy metals and chemicals that can reach surface water or groundwater. Results may vary for different artificial turf products, but more scientific research is needed (See report from Environmental and Human Health, Inc: <http://www.ehhi.org/reports/turf/> and the Santa Clara Valley Water District's report on artificial turf fields at: <http://valleywater.org/Programs/conservationannualreports.aspx>).
- ✓ Artificial turf is a synthetic material with a relatively short lifespan ranging from 10-20 years that may eventually end up in landfills.

Fortunately, the **Lawn Be Gone! Rebate Program** allows many beautiful, low water using options that result in more sustainable and beneficial landscapes. For additional information about the Lawn Be Gone! Rebate Program, or to access the Water Wise Gardening Tool to plan your landscape conversion, please call BAWSCA at 650-349-3000 or visit <http://www.bawasca.org/>.