

Pilot Water-Efficient Landscape Rebate Program

Frequently Asked Questions

How much is the rebate?

The rebate is fifty cents (\$0.50) per square foot of lawn replaced. The maximum rebate for single family residential accounts is \$500 and for non-residential accounts is \$5,000.

Who is eligible to participate?

The Program is available to residential and non-residential customers, who receive treated water in the Contra Costa Water District (CCWD) retail and wholesale service area. Customer 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. 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.

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

Any low water needing plant can be used in your water-efficient landscape project. CCWD has created the CCWD Approved Plant List as an easy reference for participants. These plants are drought-tolerant and adaptable to our local climate. The list can be found at www.ccwater.com/consERVE. Click on the link for Pilot Water-Efficient Landscape Rebate Program. The list will also be made available in printed form for those without a computer. Plants that are not on the list must be submitted to CCWD for review and accepted on a case-by-case basis.

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. The Program is intended to provide an incentive to retrofit existing lawns.

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

Yes. If artificial grass is used in any part of the conversion, the artificial grass must be installed by a licensed contractor. The contractor must install the artificial grass in accordance with the manufacturer's installation specifications. The installation must be permeable to water and air. No patio carpet or "Astroturf" type products are allowed. NOTE: the 50% plant cover requirement listed in the Terms and Conditions still applies. This means that converted areas must contain enough plants to cover at least 50% of the area with living plant cover when the plants are fully grown.

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. Keep in mind that the conversion area must still meet the fifty percent (50%) living plant coverage requirement.

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

Maybe. 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. However, because of the recent drought, it is understood that some customers may have let their lawns die in 2009 to conserve. These applications will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

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 landscaping, including trees, shrubs, groundcovers and native bunch grasses. These use less water than even the lowest water use lawn.

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

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

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. Also, organic mulch breaks down and adds nutrients to the soil. Finally, mulch keeps weeds down. 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 to cover at least 50% of the 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. You can find many plants listed in the *Sunset Western Garden Book* (available at bookstores and libraries), or ask your local nursery. For example, a retrofit of a 1,000 square foot lawn must contain a sufficient number of plants installed so that at maturity, the plants cover at least 500 square feet.

Why is there a 50% Plant Cover requirement?

The primary goal of the program is to reduce water use by removing water-thirsty lawn, and at the same time, encouraging the use of environmentally beneficial water-efficient 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?

If you are installing irrigation for the new landscaped area, it must be low volume drip*. The drip system must include a pressure regulator, filter and pressure-compensating emitters. If only part of the lawn is converted, the remaining lawn must be irrigated separately from the new landscape, and the sprinkler system for the lawn must be modified to eliminate overspray onto the new landscaped area. For information on drip irrigation, visit www.ccwater.com/conserve, and click on the link for Pilot Water-Efficient Landscape Rebate Program.

*Overhead irrigation systems with an application rate of one inch per hour or less will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The system shall have no run-off, low head drainage, overspray or other water waste to be accepted.

How many times can I apply for the rebate?

Eligible customers may participate one time per water account.

Visit www.ccwater.com/consERVE or call 925-688-8069 for more information.