



# Sustainable Lawn Replacement Program

## Frequently Asked Questions



### What are the project guidelines once I am given the Authorization to Proceed?

- Plants must be classified as “low water using” or “drought tolerant.” We do not rebate projects with medium or high water use plants. Plant classifications can be found at [www.WaterWiseGardeningSB.org](http://www.WaterWiseGardeningSB.org). Be sure to click on the “Culture” tab for each plant on the website to determine if its water needs are low or medium. You can also check <https://ccuh.ucdavis.edu/wucols-db> and select “Region 3: Santa Barbara.” If there is a plant of which you are unsure, please call our office at the number below.
- All surfaces must be permeable and covered in approved mulch. Approved mulch is organic material applied with a minimum 3” depth to the surface of the soil. Gravel is allowed between pavers and as part of rainwater catchment basins, as well as mulch for properties in the High Fire Hazard area of the City’s water service.
- Plant density of 3 plants per 100 square feet required. Up to two trees may be counted as a combined total of 100 ft<sup>2</sup> towards the mature canopy cover.
- Drip irrigation, inline drip irrigation, or hand watering is required. No overhead sprinklers can remain.
- No more than 25% of rebated area may be paving stones, flagstone, and un-mortared pavers. For permeability, must be a minimum of 4” apart, and the spacing must be filled with loose material or low water use plants. Decomposed granite, cement under and between pavers, and artificial turf not eligible.
- **Downspout Disconnect Incentive:** Disconnect downspouts that drain onto driveways, sidewalks, hardscape, or a French drain to the street. Redirect water to be absorbed into the project area/former lawn.

### What are the guidelines for retrofitting my former lawn sprinkler system?

- Cut off irrigation valve, remove it and cap the pipes (resulting in hand or no watering) OR
- Cut and cap all sprinkler heads (resulting in hand or no watering) OR
- Cut and cap all but select sprinkler heads and convert those heads to a drip system using an all-in-one conversion kit (must have a pressure regulator and a filter built in).

### What materials will disqualify my project?

- **Artificial/synthetic turf** - This rebate is designed to promote water use reduction in sustainable, watershed-friendly, living gardens. These gardens promote sustainability by providing stormwater retention, pollution reduction, wildlife habitat, urban cooling, and increased biodiversity. While synthetic/artificial turf can achieve a water use reduction in the landscape, it does not meet the sustainability goals of the program.
- **Impermeable hardscape** - Including but not limited to: Decomposed granite (DG), concrete, brick, decking, flagstone or path stones with less than 4” spacing or with DG fill.
- **Medium or high-water use plants** - Replacement of those plants will be required in order to receive the rebate. There are many beautiful, low water using plants available locally. To find garden inspiration, use our virtual garden tours and interactive water wise plant database at [www.WaterWiseGardeningSB.org](http://www.WaterWiseGardeningSB.org). Be sure to click on the “Culture” tab of each plant to see the watering needs.

### What can I plant in my parkway?

In order to sustain the health of street trees, parkways must only contain street trees, plants whose maximum height is less than 8 inches tall, and/or organic mulch. Concrete, asphalt, brick, gravel or otherwise filling up



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the ground area around any tree which substantially shuts off air, light or water from its roots, is not allowed. For more information, please contact the Parks Division at (805) 564-5433.

### What if I want to hire someone to complete my upgrade?

Various organizations train and certify local landscape professionals in water wise landscape installation and maintenance. While each certified individual has been trained and tested, the City of Santa Barbara does not endorse any specific landscape professional or company. Visit [www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/LandscapeProfessionals](http://www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/LandscapeProfessionals) to find a landscape professional in your area.

### How can I make the most significant positive change?

- **Water Wise and/or Native Plants:** In our semi-arid climate, the water requirements of a plant are an important consideration. There are many beautiful, low water using plants available locally. To find garden inspiration, use our virtual garden tours and interactive water wise plant database at [www.WaterWiseGardeningSB.org](http://www.WaterWiseGardeningSB.org). Be sure to click on the "Culture" tab of each plant to see the watering needs, as the website has some medium water use plants that are not eligible for the rebate. We also recommend visiting the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden and local nurseries to find plants and inquire about their water and maintenance needs.
- **Watershed Landscape Design:** Use permeable hardscapes to allow rainwater to penetrate slowly into the ground, where pollutants are filtered, and ground water is recharged. For more info, watch our Rainwater Harvesting webinar at [www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Rainwater](http://www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/Rainwater).
- **Improving Soil Health:** Build healthy living soil that helps reduce runoff and creates a healthy environment for plants by using compost and refraining from using pesticides.
- **Efficient Irrigation:** Optimal irrigation designs include proper hydrozones (grouping plants together with similar water needs), drip irrigation, and adjusting the irrigation controller based on weather and season. Better yet, remove the automatic system and hand water if possible.