

Turf SWAP Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



1. How does this program work?

- a. You will receive an invitation for an irrigation tune-up visit with the option to participate in Turf SWAP.
- b. Contact ACEPD staff at **352-264-6827** to ask questions and schedule an irrigation tune-up visit. The tune-up visit is free of cost and encouraged regardless of whether or not you opt to participate in Turf SWAP.
- c. ACEPD staff will identify retrofit work to be completed that will result in improved efficiency and water savings on the property. Staff will also make suggestions for turf replacement with Florida Friendly Landscaping and water saving technology additions to discuss with SWAP Shops
- d. A map with details of retrofit work and suggestions and a list of participating Florida Water Star accredited SWAP Shops that can complete the required work will be provided to the homeowner (A SWAP Shop list can also be found at www.MyYardOurWater.org)
- e. Provide your map to a Florida Water Star Accredited Professional/SWAP Shop for an estimate to make required changes and for landscape design
- f. Get permission from your HOA (if applicable)
- g. SWAP shop completes required retrofit work, removes high volume irrigation and installs Florida Friendly Landscaping, if applicable
- h. Submit completed application form, completed W9 form, and itemized invoice from SWAP Shop to ACEPD
- i. ACEPD staff will meet with you to discuss your landscape and take photos of the completed work
- j. If you've added Florida Friendly plants, water to establish as recommended by your SWAP Shop and then turn your irrigation system off and only water as needed to maximize your water savings. Sit back and enjoy your new Florida Friendly Landscaping and don't bother with chemical fertilizer!
- k. Receive your rebate check in 4-6 weeks!

2. I did not receive an invitation letter from the County, may I still get a rebate? This phase of the program will use water use data to determine eligibility. If you did not receive an invitation, you may contact ACEPD staff to inquire.

3. What is high volume irrigation? Irrigation that puts out greater than 0.5 gallons per minute per each head; This includes most older irrigation systems and traditional rotors and sprayheads. Micro irrigation or drip tubing is typically not considered high volume.

4. May I use Micro irrigation in my SWAP area? We would prefer if you didn't, but yes. You may use drip tubing and low volume irrigation that emits less than 0.5 gal/minute to replace high volume irrigation removed. If this irrigation is connected to an automatic timer, it must be on its own zone. It is best to water establishing plants with a hose with a hand held shut off device. Once your plants are established, you can likely turn off the irrigation, or just run it occasionally.

5. **May I replace an existing mulched area that currently does not look good?** If you are removing high volume irrigation lines in this area, the work in this area may still be eligible. Please confirm with EPD staff. Just adding plants to an existing mulched area is not covered.
6. **What is a SWAP Shop?** The SWAP Shop list of landscaping professionals on the MyYardOurWater.org website includes lawn care and irrigation professionals that have received Florida Water Star accreditation and have attended local Turf SWAP training. You must use one of these professionals if you would like to receive the rebate.
7. **How do I work with my Homeowner Association (HOA)?** You will need to work with your Architecture Review Committee or Board. They will likely want a sketch of what you plan to do. Please get approval prior to making changes to your landscape. Most HOAs are on board as long as you get permission first. Alachua County has a Homeowner Association (HOA) Florida Friendly Landscaping Code, learn more [here](#) and reach out if we can help!
8. **How do I choose plants?** The new plants must be on the most current Florida Friendly Landscaping list. There are many tools to help you select plants, including the SWAP Shop Professional you are hiring! Below are a few good online resources:

Water Wise Plant Database: FloridaWaterStar.com

Florida-Friendly Landscaping Plant Guide: <https://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/plants>

Florida Friendly Plant Database: <http://floridayards.org/fyplants/>

Florida Native Plant Society: <http://FNPS.org>

Florida Friendly Landscaping, 9 Principles: https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/homeowners/nine_principles.htm

9. **Should I fertilize my new plants?** No, when the new plants are installed there is normally fertilizer in the pots. Florida Friendly plants should do well without supplemental fertilizer. Skipping the use of fertilizer altogether helps protect water bodies from excessive algae growth fueled by nutrient run off. 55% of Alachua County residents say they don't use fertilizer at all. If you do fertilize in the future, consider using organic fertilizers such as compost or manure. Remember fertilizer containing Nitrogen may only be applied in the spring months when plants are actively growing and taking up nutrients. Fertilizer containing Nitrogen is prohibited from July through February.
10. **Why do I have to submit a W9 Form?** To issue a check the County needs a completed W9. Rebates are taxable income and you may receive a 1099 from the County verifying the income. There is a link to the W9 Form on the website

For more information, call (352)-264-6800.

