



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



- 1. I did not receive an invitation letter from the County, may I still get a rebate?** This program uses water use data to determine eligibility. If you did not receive an invitation, please complete an [Interest Form](#). Alachua County Water Conservation staff will contact you with more information.
- 2. What is a pre-approved irrigation professional?** Pre-approved irrigation professionals include local landscaping professionals that have Florida Water Star accreditation or have attended one of the trainings provided by the Alachua County Water Conservation staff. If your landscape professional is not on the pre-approved list, please have them contact Eliana Bardi at 352-264-6810 to determine eligibility.
- 3. What are some examples of eligible upgrades?** There have been a lot of improvements to irrigation technology over the years. The rebate program offers rebates for work that results in reducing water use outdoors. This includes repairing leaks; capping heads or disabling zones on established vegetation; replacing or upgrading components such as rainfall shut-off devices, flow sensors for leak detection, and smart controllers; and replacing high-volume irrigation such as traditional rotors and spray heads with higher efficiency components.
- 4. May I replace an existing mulched area that currently does not look good?** If the work involves removing irrigation or upgrading to more efficient components, then the work may be eligible. However, simply replacing mulch or adding plants to an existing mulched area, or other improvements that do not result in reducing water use are not covered. Please confirm your plans with Alachua County Water Conservation staff before taking action.
- 5. How do I work with my Homeowner Association (HOA)?** If you are modifying your landscape, you will likely need to work with your Architecture Review Committee or Board. They will likely want a sketch of your landscaping plan. Please secure approval prior to making changes to your landscape. Most HOAs are on board as long as you follow the process to secure approval first. Alachua County has a Homeowner Association Florida Friendly Landscaping Design Standards code (Chapter 77, Article VII) that may assist homeowners who run into issues securing HOA approval. Learn more [here](#) and reach out if we can help!
- 6. How do I choose plants?** If you wish to upgrade your landscape to conserve water, the new landscaping must be selected from a list of native or Florida Friendly Landscaping™ plants. The landscape professional you are hiring to install your new landscaping can help provide options. In addition, the resources below are available to assist in your own research:
 - Florida Native Plant Society: <http://FNPS.org>
 - Florida-Friendly Landscaping Plant Guide: <https://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/plants>
 - Water Wise Plant Database: FloridaWaterStar.com
 - Florida Friendly Plant Database: <http://floridayards.org/fyplants/>
 - Florida Friendly Landscaping, 9 Principles: https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/homeowners/nine_principles.htm
- 7. Why can't I install permanent irrigation for my new landscape?** The goal of the program is to conserve water. If the appropriate plants are selected following the Florida-friendly principle of "right plant, right place" your new landscape will only need regular watering during the establishment period using temporary irrigation. After establishment, we recommend hand watering or using a hose and sprinkler if the new landscape needs occasional supplemental watering (showing signs of stress). The use of soil amendments/compost is strongly encouraged and eligible for rebate funds (look for compost with the US Composting Council's Seal of Testing Assurance Program (STA)). Compost improves plant health and reduces the need for irrigation and fertilizer.
- 8. Should I fertilize my new plants?** No, when new plants are installed, there is normally fertilizer included in the pots. Join the 65% of Alachua County residents who say they don't use fertilizer. Skipping the use of fertilizer altogether helps protect water bodies from excessive algae growth fueled by nutrient run off. 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.
- 9. Why do I have to submit a W9 Form?** To issue a rebate 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.