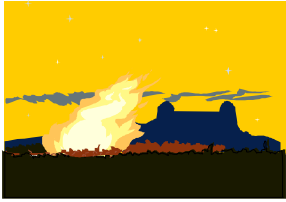


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Fire-Safe Landscaping Can Save Your Home

A Factsheet on Wildfire Safety and Prevention

Wildland fires destroy hundreds of homes and acres of land every year across the country. We must remember that fire is part of our natural environment. Our rangelands were burning long before we built our cities and towns. Our ability to live more safely in this fire environment depends upon the actions taken before a wildfire occurs. Fire-safe landscaping is an effective tool that creates an area of defensible space between your home and flammable vegetation that protects against devastating fires.

In the event of a wildfire, it is unlikely there will be enough firefighting resources available to defend every home. Consequently, the most important person in protecting a house from wildfire is the property owner.

Defensible Space Works

During the 1993 raging Malibu fires, a number of homes were saved as a result of the owners' careful pruning and landscaping techniques that protected their homes. In a fire situation, the dead trees and shrubs surrounding your home act as fuel for the fire. Removing flammable vegetation reduces the threat of fire. Follow these basic rules to create defensible space that works.

- Remove all dead plants, trees and shrubs from the site.
- Reduce excess leaves, plant parts and low-hanging branches.
- Replace dense flammable plants with fire-resistant plants.

The choice of plants, spacing and maintenance are crucial elements in any defensible space landscaping plan.

Tips for a Fire-Safe Landscape



- Create a defensible space perimeter by thinning trees and brush within 30ft around your home.
- Beyond 30ft., remove dead wood, debris and low branches.

- Eliminate small trees and plants growing under trees. They allow ground fires to jump into trees.
- Space trees 30ft. apart and prune to a height of 8 – 10ft.
- Place shrubs at least 20ft. from any structure and prune regularly.
- Plant the most drought-tolerant vegetation within three feet of your home and adjacent to structures to prevent ignition.
- Provide at least a 10-15ft separation between islands of shrubs and plant groups to break-up continuity of vegetation.

Choose Fire Resistant Materials

- Create fire-safe zones with stone walls, patios, swimming pools, decks or roadways.
- Use rock, mulch or flowerbeds and gardens as ground cover for bare spaces and as effective firebreaks.
- There are no "fire-proof" plants. Select high moisture plants that grow close to the ground and have a low sap or resin content. Check your local nursery on plants that are suited for your environment.
- Choose plants that resist ignition such as rockrose, iceplant or aloe.

- Fire-resistant shrubs include hedging roses, currant, bush honeysuckles, cotoneaster, sumac and shrub apples.
- Plant hardwood, maple, poplar and cherry trees that are less flammable than pine, fir and other conifers.



Maintain Your Home & Surrounding Property

- Maintain a well-pruned and watered landscape, keeping the plants green during the dry season, to serve as a green belt of protection against fire.
- Trim grass on a regular basis.
- Stack firewood at least 30ft from your home.
- Store flammable liquids in metal containers outside the home at least 30ft away from structures and wooden fences.
- No matter where you live, always install smoke alarms on every level of your home. Test them monthly and change the batteries once a year.

