Firewise Landscaping

CREATE DEFENSIBLE SPACE

- Reduce/modify/clear any potential fuel (materials or vegetation) in the area between your home and/or other structures (and in woodland areas in the vicinity) to slow the spread of fire
- This cleared space also allows room for firefighters to fight fires more safely
- Use fire resistant building materials when possible
- Use fire resistant plants in your landscaping – especially within 10’ of your home or other structures
- Well maintained lawn is often used as a fuel break between major plantings and structures

FIREWISE PRACTICES **this is the most important part!**

- Irrigate regularly (appropriately for the types of plants in your landscape) during the dry season
- Proper pruning maintenance is key – avoid repeated shearing
- Seasonally remove dry/diseased plant material from inside, around and below shrubs/trees/conifers
- Avoid mass plantings
- Space plants appropriately for their mature stature
- Stagger trees/shrubs in larger plantings for extra space/air flow
- Limb up shrubs and trees when appropriate to reduce ladder fuels
QUALITIES OF FIRE-RESISTANT PLANTS

• They do not readily ignite and so their foliage/stems don’t significantly contribute to the fuel that feeds a fire
• In general, most deciduous and perennial plants are naturally fire-resistant if well maintained
• Leaves are moist and supple
• Succulent or thick/leathery leaves
• Healthy/uncongested structure and interior that does not accumulate dead wood/dry material (leaves)
• Open branching habit
• Sap is water-like and has a mild (to no) odor
• Resinous materials (and saps) are little to none

QUALITIES OF FLAMMABLE PLANTS *to be avoided within 30’ of a structure

• Tendency to accumulate dry/dead twigs, leaves or needles around and within
• Very dense foliage/branching habit
• Leaves, stems and branches contain volatile waxes/terpenes/oils
• Foliage is aromatic **depends on the plant – not all are quick to ignite and this is the most significant factor is deer resistance
• Sap is gummy/resinous/strongly odorous
• May have loose/shaggy/papery bark

PLANTS – This list is just a starting point and mostly covers shrub options. Keep in mind that deciduous plants/trees are generally safe and can even shield your home from the effects of fire. Perennials and ornamental grasses are also by their nature firewise and are an important part of any landscape.

Evergreen
Abelia grandiflora (semi-evergreen) *
Arbutus unedo ‘Compacta’ – Compact Strawberry Tree
Berberis spp. (evergreen) – Evergreen Barberry **
Buxus spp. – Boxwood **
Camellia spp. *
Choisya ternata – Mexican Orange **
Choisya x dewitteana ‘Aztec Pearl’ – Cutleaf Mexican Orange **
Cotoneaster spp. – Bearberry *
Daphne spp. **
Distylium spp. **
Elaeagnus spp. – Silverberry *
Fatsia japonica – Japanese Aralia
Feijoa sellowiana – Pineapple Guava *
Garrya fremontii – Silk Tassel
Hypericum frondosum – (Shrubby) St. John’s Wart *
Ilex spp. – Holly *
Mahonia spp. – Oregon Grape **
Myrica californica – Pacific Wax Myrtle *
Nandina domestica – Heavenly Bamboo
Osmanthus spp. – False Holly/Hardy Tea Olive *
Phlomis spp. – Jerusalem Sage **
Pieris japonica – Andromeda **
Prunus lusitanica – Portuguese Laurel *
Rhamnus californica and R. tomentella – CA & Hoary Coffeeberry **
Rhododendron spp. *
Yucca filamentosa – Adam’s Needle **

Deciduous
Amelanchier spp. - Serviceberry
Aronia spp. – Chokeberry
Berberis spp. – Barberry **
Buddleia spp. – Butterfly Bush (sterile cultivars only) *
Caryopteris x clandonensis – Blue Mist/Beard **
Cercis occidentalis – Western Redbud
Chaenomeles speciosa – Flowering Quince (semi-evergreen) *
Cornus sericea/sanguinea – Redtwig Dogwood
Cotinus spp. – Smoke Bush
Euonymous a. Compacta – Compact Burning Bush *
Hamamelis spp. – Witchhazel
Holodiscus discolor – Oceanspray *
Hydrangea spp.
Lagerstroemia spp. – Crepe Myrtle *
Paeonia suffruticosa – Tree Peony **
Perovskia atriplicifolia – Russian Sage **
Philadelphus lewisii – Lewis’ Mock Orange
Physocarpus spp. – Ninebark
Rhamnus frangula – Tallhedge Buckthorn
Rhus spp. – Sumac
Ribes spp. – Flowering Currant
Rosa spp. (and hybrids) - Roses
Spirea spp. *
Symphoricarpos albus – Snowberry *
Syringa spp. – Lilac
Viburnum spp. (some semi-evergreen options too) *
**Groundcovers**
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi – Kinnickinnick *
Asarum caudatum – Wild Ginger **
Campanula p. ‘Birch Hybrid’ – Creeping Bellflower *
Delosperma spp. – Hardy Iceplant
Fragaria spp. – Creeping Strawberry *
Geranium cantabrigiense – Hardy Geranium/Cranesbill **
Origanum v. ‘Compactum’ – Dwarf Greek Oregano **
Rubus calycinoides – Creeping Raspberry/Bramble **
Sedum spp. - Stonecrop
Teucrium c. ‘Prostratum’ – Creeping Germander **
Thymus spp. – Creeping Thyme **
Veronica spp. – Speedwell *

**PLANTS TO USE WITH CAUTION** – avoid within 10’ of structures and use as singular specimens

Arctostaphylos spp. – Manzanita *
Callistemon spp. (alpine only) – Bottlebrush **
Ceanothus spp. – Blue Blossom/CA Lilac *
Cephalotaxus harringtonia – Japanese Plum Yew **
Cistus spp. – Rockrose *
Dwarf conifers (like Pine, Cedar, Spruce etc.) **
Euphorbia spp. – Spurge **
Rosmarinus officinalis – Rosemary **
Taxus spp. – Yew *
Vitex agnes-castus – Chaste Tree **

* can be deer resistant
** more reliably deer resistant

It is important to note that many plants can become more deer resistant once established or large enough to withstand occasional/seasonal browsing