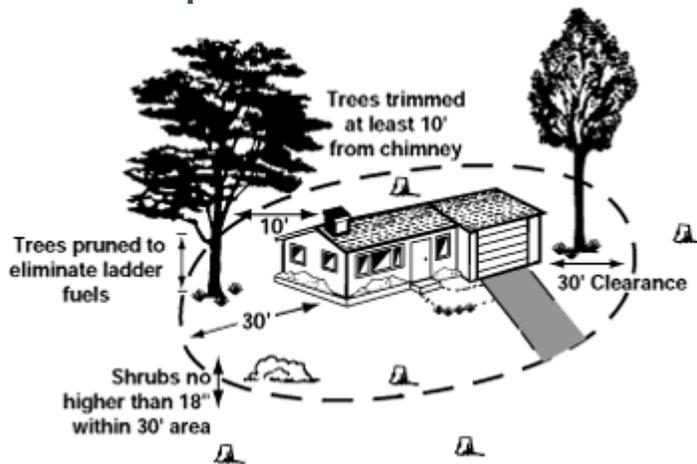


Fire Safe Landscaping

*How to protect your investment against wildfire destruction.
An easy, four step guide*

Defensible Space



Defensible space is the base around your home that will give firefighters a fighting chance against fire. It means clearing all dry grass, brush and dead leaves at least 30 feet from your home, and at least 150 feet if you're on a hill.

The key here is "at least." Your local fire department may ask for greater clearance. Contact them for requirements in your area.

Defensible space and a fire safe landscape don't mean a ring of bare dirt around your home. When establishing your landscape, keep trees furthest from your house, shrubs can be closer, and bedding plants and lawns are nearest the house.

Your home may be the biggest investment you ever make. Protect that investment by following the steps in this brochure to create a fire safe landscape.

Planning

Assess your fire risk. Is your home on a hill? Are you near highly flammable native vegetation or drought-damaged ornamental plants? If your answer is

yes, your fire risk is greater than average.

Contact your local fire department for fire hazard ratings in your neighborhood.

Plan your landscape to reduce the amount of flammable vegetation nearest your home. Establish defensible space.

Consider consulting your local nursery or a landscape contractor to help plan your landscape.

Spacing

Eliminate the "fire ladder." Fire needs fuel to burn. You can sap its strength by robbing it of the continuous sequence of vegetation that can carry flames from your landscape to your house.

Group plants of similar height and water requirements to create a "landscape mosaic" that can slow the spread of fire and use water most efficiently.

Space trees at least 10 feet apart, and keep branches trimmed at least 10 feet from your roof. For trees taller than 18 feet, prune lower branches within six feet of the ground.

Install fire resistant, drought-tolerant plants that have a high moisture content. Use plants that do not accumulate dead leaves or twigs.

Use masonry or stone walls to separate plant groups and add variety to your landscape.

Watering

Choose the right irrigation system. While all plants will eventually burn, healthy plants burn less quickly. Your plant selection and water availability will determine the right system for you.

Consider drip irrigation for watering most of your landscape. It's effective and conserves water because it targets where the water goes and how much gets there.

Use sprinklers for lawns or turf landscaping. Drip irrigation does not work well on lawns. Sprinklers on timers ensure your lawn is getting the right

amount of water to keep it healthy and fire resistant.

Maintenance

Keep your landscape healthy and clean. On a regular basis, remove dead branches, leaves and pine needles from your yard. These can serve as added fuel to a fire.

Prune and thin shrubs, trees and other plants to minimize the fuel load.

Be diligent about cleaning up, especially during fire season. Remove dead leaves from under the plants as well.

Involve your gardener. If a gardener cares for your property, ask him or her to include these regular maintenance steps as part of the routine service.

Recycle/compost plant materials. Participate in your community's green waste recycling program. You can also compost plant litter and create a money-saving alternative to store-bought soil and mulch. Grasscycling is another time- and money-saving way to make your green waste work for you.

Find out more about Fire Safe!

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), a department of the Resources Agency of California, provides leadership and services to protect and encourage sound land management of the forest, brush and grass-covered lands in California.

Fire Safe Landscaping is part of a series of fire safety informational materials. Contact your nearest CDF fire station or one of the administrative offices below for "Fire Safe Inside and Out," a homeowners' guide to fire safety inside the home and out.

CDF Headquarters
1416 Ninth Street
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244
916/653-9952

CDF Coast-Cascade Region
135 Ridgeway Avenue
P.O. Box 670
Santa Rosa, CA 95402
707/576-2275