

Wildfire Preparation Checklist

When wildfires ignite, they can spread very quickly. Preparedness now will help save lives and homes. It's important to know how to evacuate and what to bring with you. If wild land fires are threatening your area, listen to your radio or television for reports and evacuation information. Follow the directions of local authorities.

THE FIVE Ps of IMMEDIATE EVACUATION:

- Pets> and livestock too
- Papers> Important documents
- Prescriptions> Medications, eye glasses, hearing aids, etc.
- Pictures> Irreplaceable memories
- Personal Computer> Information on hard drives and discs

PREPARING FOR THE FIRE SEASON:

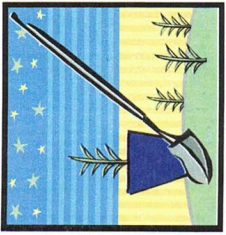
- Collect valuables, important documents, medications, and other personal items in one place and be ready to evacuate if necessary.
- What you can fit in your vehicle is what you can take. Make priorities by determining what is replaceable and what is not.
- Maintain a disaster supplies kit. This includes a first aid kit, emergency tools, a battery-powered radio and flashlight, extra batteries, car keys, credit cards, water and non-perishable food. Also consider blankets and sleeping bags.
- Determine your need to have coverings for windows and skylights to increase fire resistance. Have these coverings readily accessible.
- Have a means of transporting pets and livestock readily available.
- Make sure the needs of children and any elderly or disabled family members are met.
- Clearly post your name and address, so it can be seen from the street.
- Establish and practice a family evacuation plan and meeting location. Determine who you will notify about your evacuation. Determine where you get fire updates from reliable sources.

Wildfire Preparation Checklist – 2

WHEN A FIRE IS NEARBY:

- Park your vehicle facing out. Put your valuables in your car. Place the car keys where you can find them quickly.
- Dress appropriately. Wear sturdy shoes, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, gloves and a bandana.
- Confine or secure your pets to one room or area. Prepare them to be transported.
- Move all flammable furniture (including outdoor furniture) to the center of your home.
- Keep your electricity on and leave some lights on.
- Close shutters, blinds, and heavy drapes. Remove lightweight drapes and curtains.
- Close fireplace dampers and fireplace screens.
- Shut all interior and exterior doors, and leave them unlocked.
- Place a note attached to the front door stating the names of evacuees, the time and date of your evacuation, your destination, and your contact information.
- Connect a garden hose to a faucet and leave buckets of water around your house.
- Place a ladder outside for roof access.

-- Source: *READY*, from www.az211.gov



The primary goal of fuel modification is to make your home less vulnerable to the ravages of wildfire. Picture the area around your home in zones. Zone One is closest to your house and Zone Four is the farthest away.



Firewise Landscape Guidelines

- **ZONE ONE (1):** This well-irrigated area surrounds your home for at least 30 feet on all sides. This zone provides space for firefighters to defend your structure in the event of an emergency. Plants in this area should be carefully spaced trees and shrubs that are fire resistant.
- **ZONE TWO (2):** Fire resistant plants should be used here. Use low-growing vegetation in this zone. Your irrigation system should extend into this area.
- **ZONE THREE (3):** Remember to keep the volume of fuel (vegetation) in this section low. Plant low-growing vegetation and trees that are spaced well apart in this area.
- **ZONE FOUR (4):** This zone is furthest away from the structures you want to protect and is a natural area. Be selective in thinning here and remove highly flammable vegetation.

Don't forget:

- Carefully space the trees and shrubs you plant.
- Remove "ladder fuels." This vegetation serves as a link between grass and tree tops. Ladder fuels can carry fire from vegetation to a structure and vice versa.
- Mow dry grass and weeds on a regular basis.





REDUCE YOUR RISK OF WILDFIRE IN JUST ONE WEEKEND

- **KEEP YOUR ROOF CLEAN**. The single most vulnerable part of your home is your roof. Be vigilant and keep it and your rain gutters clean from pine needles, combustible leaves, and other debris that can quickly ignite. Remove dead branches and limbs within 10 feet of your chimney and deck.
- **RATE YOUR ROOF**. If you have a wood shake roof, consider treatment or replacement to make it more resistant to fire. Install a spark arrester on your chimney of non-flammable material with openings in the mesh no larger than ½ inch in diameter. Inspect your spark arrester annually.
- **WHAT IS DEFENSIBLE SPACE? YOU NEED IT!** Defensible space is a buffer zone between a house and approaching fire where vegetation has been removed or modified to reduce the threat of wildfire. A standard 30 foot distance around your home is the minimum if you're on level ground. Additional clearance as great as 200 feet may be needed as the slope of your lot increases. Defensible space not only reduces the risk of wildfire reaching your home in the critical minutes it takes a fire to pass, but it also provides a space for firefighters to defend your home. During a major wildfire when firefighters and resources are stretched and many homes are at risk, firefighters will triage or focus on homes they can safely defend.
- **REMOVE FLAMMABLE BRUSH, TREES AND VEGETATION FROM AROUND YOUR HOME**. Replace flammable landscaping with fire-resistant counterparts. Select plants that are woody, without resin, with high moisture content in leaves, and little or no seasonal accumulation of dead vegetation. Check with a local home and garden center about varieties of vegetation that exhibit fire-resistant traits.
- **PRUNE OR REMOVE TREES**. Be sure to prune or remove low-hanging branches to a height of 6-8 feet above the ground to keep a low-burning fire from climbing up these "fuel ladders." You don't want fires climbing into your tree canopies and becoming flame-throwers. If you live in the wildland/urban interface zone and want to assist in reducing wildfire danger in your community, contact your local fire departments for guidelines before removing trees or thinning your property. **DO NOT** work on someone else's property without their permission.

REDUCE YOUR RISK OF **WILDFIRE** IN JUST ONE WEEKEND--2

- **CUT GRASS AND WEEDS ON A REGULAR BASIS**. During periods of high fire danger, you should mow grasses and low vegetation. Fire spreads quickly in weeds and grasses that are overgrown and dry.
- **RECYCLE BRANCHES AND YARD DEBRIS**. Look into alternative methods of disposal like recycling or composting. Always check with your local fire agency for up-to-date burning regulations before you strike a match. Depending on circumstances, burning could be restricted or not allowed. And burning should only be used as a last resort. Seek safer alternatives.
- **RELOCATE BUILDING MATERIALS, WOOD PILES, AND OTHER FLAMMABLE MATERIALS**. Stack wood, building debris and other combustible materials at least 30 feet away from any structures. How about that firewood tucked under your front steps? Also remove flammable vegetation at least 10 feet from piles of wood and debris as an additional safeguard.
- **KEEP YOUR CHIMNEY CLEAN**. Have your chimney checked twice a year for dangerous buildup of creosote or soot. Have your chimney cleaned at least once a year or whenever needed. Keep your dampers in good working order.
- **DESIGNATE AN EMERGENCY MEETING PLACE**. Designate a location outside where family members meet if a fire occurs.
- **USE SIGNAGE AND CREATE ACCESS**. When a wildfire occurs, firefighters may be arriving from all over the country and will not be familiar with your area. Easy to read address numbers on a contrasting background should be posted at your driveway entrance to aid firefighters in finding your home quickly during an emergency. Names of roads should be indicated at all intersections. Each home should have two different entrance and exit routes. Dead-end roads that terminate in a cul-de-sac should have a minimum turn-around radius of 60 feet. Roads should not be in excess of a 12 percent grade so that emergency vehicles can access your property. Bridges must be able to support 30,000 lbs. To accommodate firefighting equipment. All roads leading to your property should be at least 16 feet wide to allow for the entrance of emergency vehicles and the passage of evacuating vehicles.
- **DESIGNATE AN EMERGENCY MEETING PLACE**. Designate a location outside where family members meet if a fire occurs.

REDUCE YOUR RISK OF **WILDFIRE** IN JUST ONE WEEKEND--3

- **USE SIGNAGE AND CREATE ACCESS**. When a wildfire occurs, firefighters may be arriving from all over the country and will not be familiar with your area. Easy to read address numbers on a contrasting background should be posted at your driveway entrance to aid firefighters in finding your home quickly during an emergency. Names of roads should be indicated at all intersections. Each home should have two different entrance and exit routes. Dead-end roads that terminate in a cul-de-sac should have a minimum turn-around radius of 60 feet. Roads should not be in excess of a 12 percent grade so that emergency vehicles can access your property. Bridges must be able to support 30,000 lbs. To accommodate firefighting equipment. All roads leading to your property should be at least 16 feet wide to allow for the entrance of emergency vehicles and the passage of evacuating vehicles.
- **DEVELOP AN EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY**. Create easy access to your closest emergency water source. Mark all emergency water sources clearly and notify your local fire department of their existence. An emergency water supply could be a community water/hydrant system or cooperative storage tank with neighbors. Swimming pools can serve as an excellent source of additional water. A minimum storage supply of 2,500 gallons per lot can go a long way in helping firefighters defend your home. Locate and make note of any nearby streams, lakes, rivers, or other bodies of water that firefighters can access if needed.
- **HAVE TOOLS FOR FIGHTING FIRE HANDY**. It is fire wise to have the following tools readily available: a shovel, a bucket, a rake, and 100 feet of pre-connected garden hose. You should have a ladder long enough to reach your roof in case of a roof fire. Make sure everyone in your family knows where these items are stored.
- **SEEK SAFE STORAGE**. Gasoline and solvents should be stored in approved safety cans away from occupied buildings. LPG tanks should be in an area clear of combustible vegetation and far enough away from buildings for valves to be shut off in case of fire.
- The following websites are excellent sources of fire prevention and fire wise information for property and homeowners in Tonto Rim Country:

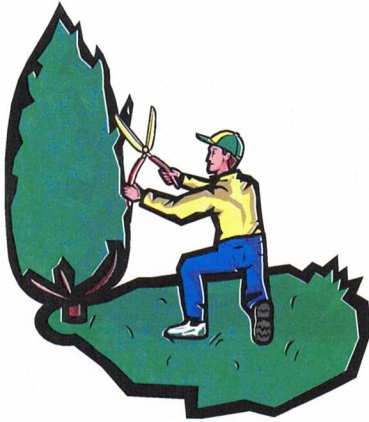
www.firewise.org

www.fs.fed.us/r3/fire/

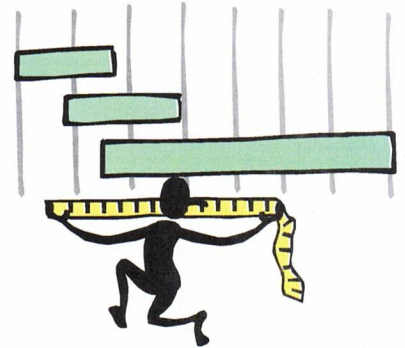
www.bonitacreek.org



FIREWISE LANDSCAPING: VEGETATION REMOVAL OR MODIFICATION



By
Gary Roberts
District Fire Prevention Officer
Payson Ranger District
Tonto National Forest
USDA Forest Service



Generally, homes are not fireproof, but you can create “defensible space” that will diminish the likelihood of flames reaching your home if a wildfire occurs. Each year, wildfire moves into wildland/urban interface zones and ravages homes and destroys cabins. Defensible space is landscaping designed to protect a building by stopping or slowing the advance of wildfire. It also provides space for firefighters to work in to defend your home. Firewise landscaping reduces the amount of flammable vegetation nearest your home and also discourages fire from moving from plant to plant.

Creating defensible space doesn’t necessarily mean denuding your property with a barren 30-foot swath around your home. A visually appealing fire-resistant landscape can be achieved with proper planning. In general, it entails creating space devoid of fuels and placing less flammable materials closest to your home. If you create a mosaic of well-spaced, fire-resistant plants, it will slow the advance of fire. Conifers or plants with high resin content should be further away from buildings.

All vegetation will burn under extreme dryness. Plants survive best if kept moist and healthy. Thin out and prune trees, shrubs, and other plants to minimize the fuel load and to reduce competition for water. Also be sure to remove dead leaves, limbs, or debris in order to eliminate easy places for sparks or embers to ignite a fire.

Arrange rock gardens nearest your house or plant low ground-cover or grass. It is best to locate trees at least 30 feet away from your home and at least 10 feet apart. Look at the size of each tree and the length of its branches, however, because larger trees require greater spacing. When creating your “defensible space,” be conscious of horizontal and vertical distance between trees and shrubs. Group your vegetation of similar heights together and leave

a space of 6-to-8 feet between plants and tree limbs. You don't want flames climbing these "fuel ladders" into your tree canopies. Consider using stone or masonry as an effective way to separate vegetation of differing heights.

When creating defensible space, remember that a home on level ground requires a safety zone of 30 feet, but the size of your defensible space may need to increase up to 200 feet as the slope on your lot increases. Bear in mind that fire creates updrafts and convection heat moves quickly uphill. If your home is on a slope, plants will need to be spaced further apart and further from your house.

It may surprise you to learn that a firefighter is not as important as a property owner when it comes to protecting a house from wildfire. The proactive action taken by you before a wildfire occurs (such as fire-resistive landscaping) is of paramount importance. Many people mistakenly assume that a fire engine will be parked in their driveway as firefighters are defending their home from wildfire. It is likely, during a major catastrophic wildfire, that firefighting resources and personnel will be stretched to the max and will not be able to protect every home. During extreme fire conditions, firefighters must triage or determine quickly which homes they can effectively and safely defend.

It is crucial as a property owner, that you create defensible space by using appropriate landscaping that will reduce fire intensity as it nears your home. Fire-resistive plants burn with a slower rate of fire spread, burn with relatively lower intensity, and have shorter flame lengths. For your defensible space, select vegetation that is woody, without resin, with high moisture in leaves, has little or no seasonal accumulation of dead material, and is drought tolerant and requires little care. The following vegetation make excellent choices for wildfire-resistive landscaping. All grow best at recommended elevations or lower:

TREES

- ✓ Box Elder (6500')
- ✓ Hackberry (4500-7000')
- ✓ Honey Locust (6500')
- ✓ Green Ash (8500')

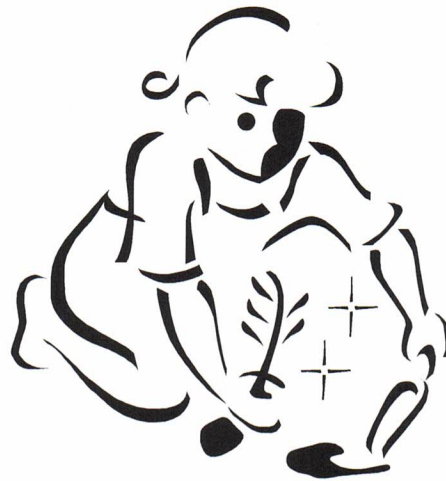


Firewise Landscaping/Roberts—3

- ✓ Amur Chokecherry (6500')
- ✓ Narrowleaf Cottonwood (5000')
- ✓ Crab Apple (elevation varies)
- ✓ Willow (size and elevation varies)

SHRUBS

- ✓ Lilac (8500')
- ✓ Oregon Grape (8000')
- ✓ Barberry (7500')
- ✓ Forsythia (8000')
- ✓ Serviceberry (10,000')
- ✓ Cotoneaster (7500')
- ✓ Russian Sage (8500')
- ✓ Sand Cherry (9000')
- ✓ Cinquefoil (10,000')
- ✓ Skunkbush Sumac (9000')
- ✓ Wood's Rose (10,000')
- ✓ Virginia Creeper
- ✓ Red Osier Dogwood
- ✓ Elderberry



GROUND COVER/PERENNIALS

- ✓ Periwinkle
- ✓ Moss Pink (7500')
- ✓ Snow in Summer (10,000')
- ✓ Blue Flax (8500')

- ✓ Red Hot Poker (8000')
- ✓ Coreopsis (7000')
- ✓ Creeping Thyme (8500')
- ✓ Wild Strawberry (10,000')
- ✓ Day Lily (8000-10,000')
- ✓ Ice Plant
- ✓ Common Thrift

The aforementioned are a few of the fire-resistive plants and trees you should consider when creating your defensible zone of landscaping. Check with your local nursery about additional plants and trees that exhibit fire-resistive traits.

Useful websites for wildfire information:

- ✓ www.governor.state.az.us/FHC
- ✓ www.firewise.org
- ✓ www.fs.fed.us/r3/fire
- ✓ www.azstatefire.com
- ✓ www.fs.fed.us/news/fire
- ✓ www.fireplan.gov

