

## **Introduction, Thank you, Topics**

**Landscaping for Wildfire Safety-** How to make your landscape more fire resistive  
General Care & Plant hygiene for existing landscapes, new installations, improvements, or replacements

Characteristics and properties of fire safe plants

Design (hardening)

Examples of plants and resources

## **General Care & Plant hygiene-(4 D's)**

You can ensure your plants will be more resistant to wildfire by regularly watering, fertilizing, clearing away dry debris, pruning.

1. Make sure to clear plant matter from your garden regularly, especially during droughts. These dead materials can fuel a fire.
  - A well-watered and well-maintained lawn can also create a fuel break
  - Using drip irrigation can help both conserve water and deliver enough water to your plants.
2. Pruning or thinning shrubs and trees to have a more open structure will help ensure they do not to accumulate dead material within themselves.
  - Shrubs should be spaced out with two times their height between them.
  - Trees should be 10 feet apart and tree canopies should end 10 feet away from the house.
  - Lowest tree branches should have a minimum of six feet of clearance from the ground
  - vertical clearance from shrubs that is at least three times the height of the shrub.

## **Design (Hardening)**

For existing landscapes, new installations, improvements, or replacements

- Patios, flowerbeds, and walkways can create firebreaks through vegetation, which will slow the spread of fire.
- Take care when placing bark mulch as part of home landscaping, as wildfire sparks can ignite this fuel. Avoid using bark mulch within 5 feet of your house

## **Characteristics and Properties of Firesafe Plants**

Fire-resistant plants do not easily ignite, and their foliage and stems do not contribute to fire intensity.

When looking for fire-resistant plants, check for the following characteristics:

- Supple leaves that are moist or have high water-content
- Watery sap with little odor
- Plants with an open-growth structure (space between branches)
- No dead wood
- Thick bark that does not peel away from the trunk

Trees and shrubs that are deciduous (shed their leaves annually) are usually more fire-resistant than evergreen plants. Groundcovers that have thick, fleshy leaves like aloe or succulent plants, which are both fire- and drought-resistant.

## **Fire Resistant Plants to Use When Landscaping for Wildfire Safety**

**Buckwheat-** California buckwheat is hardy and easy to grow, preferring well-drained soil in a sunny location. Its flowers are attractive to pollinators and low-growing varieties can be used as a ground cover.

**Catalina Cherry-** This drought-resistant evergreen can grow up to 40 feet tall, with white flowers in the spring that are popular with pollinators, which produce red fruits in the fall.

**Coral Bells-** This leafy plant is known for its colorful foliage and drought resistance. It makes a good ground cover at 12-18" tall and produces delicate flowers on tall, thin stalks.

**Island Mallow-** This ornamental plant is native to California and makes a popular windbreak, growing up to four meters tall with showy red flowers. It does well in clay and sandy soils, making it ideal for preventing erosion.

**Lemonade Berry-** Also called lemonade sumac, this can be grown as a shrub or small tree. It is often seen covering entire hillsides. The berries are an important source of food for birds and small mammals, while its limbs provide excellent shelter.

**Lily of the Nile-** This herbaceous and leafy perennial grows striking clusters of blue and white flowers on stalks that can reach up to four feet high.

**Manzanita-** Manzanita can grow to 20 feet high and are loved for their shiny red or mahogany-colored bark. The larger varieties will continue growing for a century or more and produce flowers that attract pollinators.

**Oak-** There are over 20 different varieties of oak in California. Oak trees are not only important to fire resistance; if placed strategically, their canopy can help reduce air-conditioning costs significantly.

**Rockrose-** This compact shrub loves sun and heat and is tolerant to both drought and poor soil conditions. It's a perfect accent to rock gardens or other fire breaks you may incorporate into your landscape.

**Succulents-** Succulents like aloe or cacti have a naturally high-water content and will wilt without catching fire. They are ideal for helping reduce damage from wildfires and can create a natural fire break.

**Woolly Blue Curl-** This evergreen shrub grows three to four feet high and flowers in tall, purple spikes from May to August. It needs full sun to thrive, but requires no additional water once established.

**Yarrow-** Yarrow is a hardy and versatile perennial, with a showy head of compact white and yellow flowers. It resists drought and is a favorite with bees and butterflies.

**Yucca-** Yucca is a great fire-resistant plant and one of the first to begin sprouting again in burned areas.