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Develop and Maintain a Fire Safe Landscape Around Your Home

Your first defense against Wildland fire is to create a Fire Safe landscape around your home. This can be achieved by removing flammable vegetation and replacing it with fire resistive plants; spacing the plants in your yard; and clearing away dead leaves on your roof and dry brush around your home.

Defensible Space

If you are able to create a Fire Safe landscape for at least 30 feet around your house (and out to 100 feet or more in some areas), you will reduce the chance of a Wildland fire spreading onto your property and burning through to your home. This is the basis for creating a "defensible space" –an area that will help protect your home and provide a safety zone for fire fighters who are battling the flames.

Clearing all flammable vegetation a minimum of 30 feet around your home and other structures will provide you with the greatest chance for survival.

But this does not mean you have to live with a ring of bare dirt around your home. You can create a defensible space and also beautify your property.

Fire Safe Landscaping

You can start with the native vegetation around your home. Many of the plants that grow naturally in your area are highly flammable during the summer and can actually "fuel" a Wildland fire, causing it to spread rapidly through your neighborhood. Removing flammable native vegetation and replacing it with low growing, fire resistive plants is one of the easiest and most effective ways to create defensible space. You should select landscape vegetation based on fire resistance and ease of maintenance.

In general, fire resistive plants:

- Grow close to the ground.
- Have a low sap and resin content.
- Grow without accumulating dead branches, needles, or leaves.
- Are easily maintained and pruned.
- Are drought tolerant in some cases.

Some more common species of fire resistive plants are rosemary, African daisy, iceplant, and periwinkle.

Contact the local nursery to find out which fire resistive plants are adapted to the climate in your area. Stay away from unsafe ornamental landscaping plants, such as junipers, which may actually increase the fire risk your home faces.

Other Fire Safe Precautions

After you have removed and/or replaced flammable native vegetation around your home for a minimum of 30 feet, there are other Fire Safe precautions that you should follow:

- Vary the height of your landscape plants and give them adequate spacing.
- Remove dead limbs overhanging your roof and any limb within 10 feet of your chimney.
- Work with your neighbors to clear common area between houses and prune areas of heavy vegetation that are a threat to both.
- Avoid planting trees under or near electrical lines, where they may grow into or contact the lines under windy conditions, causing a fire.
- Properly dispose of all cut vegetation by an approved method.
- Stack firewood and scrap woodpiles at least 30 feet from any structure and clear away any flammable vegetation within 10 feet of these woodpiles.
- Clear pine needles, leaves, or other debris from the roof of your house and any other buildings on your property.

Remember that after you have established your Fire Safe landscape, you should maintain it regularly. Because there is only **ONE YOU!**