



## **As we head into fire season, here are a few tips from the Firewise program to help you protect your property.**

### **When designing and installing a Firewise landscape, consider the following:**

Local area fire history • Site location and overall terrain • Prevailing winds and seasonal weather  
• Property contours and boundaries • Native vegetation • Plant characteristics and placement (duffage, water and salt retention ability, aromatic oils, fuel load per area, and size) • Irrigation requirements • Give yourself added protection with “fuel breaks” like driveways, gravel walkways, and lawns

### **To create a Firewise landscape, the primary goal is fuel reduction.**

To this end, initiate the zone concept. Zone 1 is closest to the structure; Zones 2-4 move progressively further away.

**Zone 1:** This well-irrigated area encircles the structure for at least 30 feet on all sides, providing space for fire suppression equipment in the event of an emergency. Plantings should be limited to carefully spaced low flammability species.

**Zone 2:** Low flammability plant materials should be used here. Plants should be low-growing and the irrigation system should extend into this section.

**Zone 3:** Place low-growing plants and well spaced trees in this area, remembering to keep the volume of vegetation (fuel) low.

**Zone 4:** This furthest zone from the structure is a natural area. Selectively prune and thin all plants and remove highly flammable vegetation.

### **When maintaining a landscape:**

- Mow the lawn regularly, and dispose of cuttings and debris promptly, according to local regulations.
- Be sure the irrigation system is well maintained.
- Use care when refueling garden equipment; maintain equipment regularly; store flammable liquids properly.
- Become familiar with local regulations regarding vegetation clearances, disposal of debris, and fire safety requirements for equipment.

Any structures attached to the house, such as decks, porches, fences, and outbuildings should be considered part of the house. These structures can act as fuel bridges, particularly if constructed from flammable materials. Therefore, consider the following:

- If you wish to attach an all-wood fence to your house, use masonry or metal as protective barriers between the fence and house.
- Use metal when constructing a trellis and cover it with high-moisture, low flammability vegetation.
- Prevent combustible materials and debris from accumulating beneath patio decks or elevated porches. Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire screening no larger than 1/8-inch mesh.
- Make sure an elevated wooden deck is not located at the top of a hill where it will be in direct line of a fire moving up-slope. Consider a terrace instead.