

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Wildfire protection through landscaping



Photos Cynthia Brian

Angel Face Roses surrounded by flagstone and gravel for fire-resistance.

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What can you do now to create a more fire-resistant landscape?

- o Include pavers, bricks, pavement, gravel, rocks, dry creek beds, fountains, ponds, pools, and lawns.
- o Select high moisture plants that grow close to the ground with a low sap and resin content.
- o Plant the right plant in the correct location. Leave space between plants.
- o Minimize the inclusion of evergreen trees within 30 feet of structures. Clear the understory. Keep trees 20 feet away from chimneys.
- o Remove invasive species or swaths of flammable plants including ivy, rosemary, broom, coyote brush, chamise and juniper.
- o Keep mulch moist. Create zones of rock, brick or gravel. Bark and leaves are not mulches recommended near structures.
- o Prune trees 6-10 feet above the ground to hinder fire laddering.
- o Keep appropriate clearance to reduce the threat of burning embers from decorative features such as gazebos, fences, sheds, porches and junk areas.
- o Irrigate and maintain all flora, lawns and hillsides. Clover, groundcovers, and grasses that are kept low and green are excellent alternatives.
- o Due to soil erosion, bare ground is not recommended.



Strawberries planted as a low ground cover would reduce ignition.

Prone to Ignite Plants

If you have these specimens in your garden, prune and maintain appropriately or eliminate them.

Acacia	Ivy	Palm
Arborvitae or Thuya	Cypress	Pine
Bamboo	Eucalyptus	Rosemary
Greasewood or	Juniper	Cedar
Chamise	Burning Bush or	Douglas Fir
French, Spanish,	Gas plant	Coyote Bush
and Scotch Broom	Pampas Grass	Pride of Madeira

General Rules of Fire Safety

Heed the checklist from our local fire departments to create a defensible space around your home. Follow fire district recommendations:

- o Prevent embers from igniting your home by clearing leaves, needles, and debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks.
- o Mow grasses and weeds.
- o Keep your garden watered.
- o Prune tree limbs to keep the lowest branches 6-10 feet from the ground.
- o Reduce "fire fuel laddering" by not allowing bushes or trees to touch one another.
- o Keep combustible materials 15-30 feet away from structures.
- o Maintain your property and be alert for any fire danger.

Weed abatement must be completed by June 1. Get out there and get your landscape more fire-resistant. We all have a responsibility to one another to help keep our community from experiencing a wildfire.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing. Be fire safe.