

Fire Safe Landscaping

Homes in the San Luis Obispo Local Very Fire Hazard Severity Zones are required to maintain a minimum of 100 ft. around the house and any important structures clear of hazardous vegetation. Certain plants and trees are also discouraged as they contribute to firefighting or fire spread problems. Until irrigated, FireWise landscaping is installed, keep weeds mowed to less than 6" from April through November.

Defensible Space

A defensible space is the base around your home that will give firefighters a fighting chance against fire. It means clearing all dry grass, brush and dead leaves at least 100 feet from your home, and more if on the crest of a hill. The key here is "at least." Call the Fire Prevention Bureau to determine what would be appropriate in your area. Defensible space and a fire safe landscape don't mean a ring of bare dirt around your home. When establishing your landscape, keep trees furthest from your house, shrubs can be closer, and bedding plants and lawns are nearest the house.

Spacing

Eliminate the "fire ladder." Fire needs fuel to burn. You can sap its strength by robbing it of the continuous sequence of vegetation that can carry flames from your landscape to your house.

Group plants of similar height and water requirements to create a "landscape mosaic" that can slow the spread of fire and use water most efficiently.

Space trees at least 10 feet apart, and keep branches trimmed at least 10 feet from your roof. Remove lower branches within six feet of the ground.

Managing Natural Vegetation

For areas where there is not irrigated landscaping keep weeds mowed to less than 6" from April – November. Mow along any roads and driveways. Keep at least 100' mowed around any structure (including a neighbor's home or buildings).

Discouraged Plants: *Do not use the following plants in the Local Very High Fire severity Zones:*

- Fir
- Cedar
- Eucalyptus (Gum)
- Larch
- Spruce
- Pepper Tree
- Buckwheat
- Brooms
- Acacia
- Cypress
- Juniper
- Palm
- Pine
- Tamarisk
- Hemlock
- Red Shanks
- California Sagebrush
- Coyote Brush
- Eualia Grass
- Fountain Grass
- Bamboo
- California Sagebrush
- Algerian Ivy
- Arborvitae
- Chamise
- Pampas Grass
- Black Sage
- Arborvitae
- Japanese Hunnysuckle

Maintenance

Keep your landscape healthy and clean. Prune and thin shrubs, trees and other plants to minimize the fuel load. Please keep in mind that open spaces outside of the City limits are not managed. It is your responsibility to make your own property fire safe. Do weed mowing before 10:00 am. Once temperatures are hot and humidity low, any spark in the dry grass can start a fire.