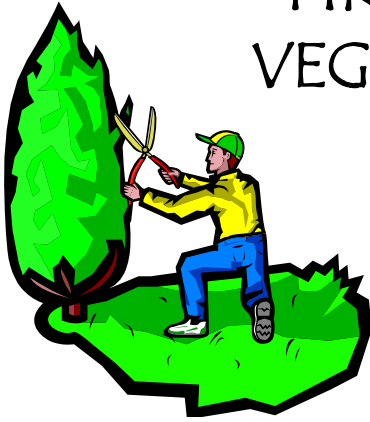
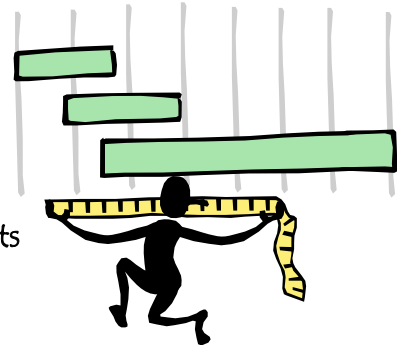


# FIREWISE LANDSCAPING: VEGETATION REMOVAL OR MODIFICATION



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Payson and Pleasant Valley Ranger Districts  
870,000 Acres  
Tonto National Forest



Generally, homes are not fireproof, but you can create “defensible space” that will diminish the likelihood of flames reaching your home if a wildfire occurs. Each year, wildfire moves into wildland/urban interface zones and ravages homes and destroys cabins. Defensible space is landscaping designed to protect a building by stopping or slowing the advance of wildfire. It also provides space for firefighters to work in to defend your home. Firewise landscaping reduces the amount of flammable vegetation nearest your home and discourages fire from moving from plant to plant.

Creating defensible space doesn’t necessarily mean denuding your property with a barren 30-foot swath around your home. A visually appealing fire-resistive landscape can be achieved with proper planning. In general, it entails creating space devoid of fuels and placing less-flammable materials closest to your home. If you create a mosaic of well-spaced, fire-resistive plants, it will slow the advance of fire. Conifers or plants with high resin content should be further away from buildings.

All vegetation will burn under extreme dryness. Plants survive best if kept moist and healthy. Thin out and prune trees, shrubs, and other plants to minimize the fuel load and to reduce competition for water. Also be sure to remove dead leaves, limbs, or debris in order to eliminate easy places for sparks or embers to ignite a fire.

Arrange rock gardens nearest your house or plant low ground cover or grass. It is best to locate trees at least 30 feet away from your home and at least 10 feet apart. Look at the size of each tree and the length of its branches, however, because larger trees require greater spacing. When creating your “defensible space,” be conscious of horizontal and vertical distance between trees and shrubs. Group your vegetation of similar heights together and leave

## Firewise Landscaping/Roberts—2

a space of 6-to-8 feet between plants and tree limbs. You don't want flames climbing these "fuel ladders" into your tree canopies. Consider using stone or masonry as an effective way to separate vegetation of differing heights.

When creating defensible space, remember that a home on level ground requires a safety zone of 30 feet, but the size of your defensible space may need to increase up to 200 feet as the slope on your lot increases. Bear in mind that fire creates updrafts and convection heat moves quickly uphill. If your home is on a slope, plants will need to be spaced further apart and further from your house.

It may surprise you to learn that a firefighter is not as important as a property owner when it comes to protecting a house from wildfire. The proactive action taken by you before a wildfire occurs (such as fire-resistive landscaping) is of paramount importance. Many people mistakenly assume that a fire engine will be parked in their driveway as firefighters are defending their home from wildfire. It is likely, during a major catastrophic wildfire, that firefighting resources and personnel will be stretched to the max and will not be able to protect every home. During extreme fire conditions, firefighters must triage or determine quickly which homes they can effectively and safely defend.

It is crucial as a property owner, that you create defensible space by using appropriate landscaping that will reduce fire intensity as it nears your home. Fire-resistive plants burn with a slower rate of fire spread, burn with relatively lower intensity, and have shorter flame lengths. For your defensible space, select vegetation that is woody, without resin, with high moisture in leaves, has little or no seasonal accumulation of dead material, and is drought tolerant and requires little care. The following vegetation make excellent choices for wildfire-resistive landscaping. All grow best at recommended elevations or lower:

### TREES

- ✓ Box Elder (6500')
- ✓ Hackberry (4500-7000')
- ✓ Honey Locust (6500')
- ✓ Green Ash (8500')



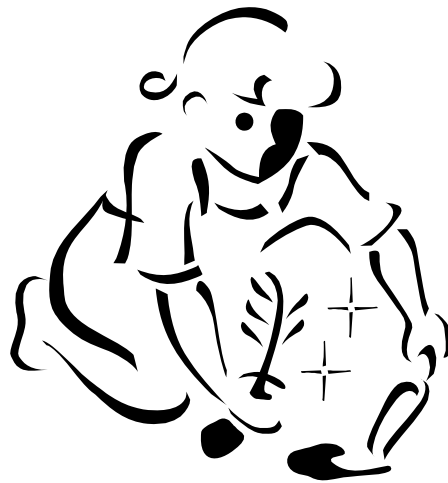
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## Firewise Landscaping/Roberts—3

- ✓ Amur Chokecherry (6500')
- ✓ Narrowleaf Cottonwood (5000')
- ✓ Crab Apple (elevation varies)
- ✓ Willow (size and elevation varies)

### SHRUBS

- ✓ Lilac (8500')
- ✓ Oregon Grape (8000')
- ✓ Barberry (7500')
- ✓ Forsythia (8000')
- ✓ Serviceberry (10,000')
- ✓ Cotoneaster (7500')
- ✓ Russian Sage (8500')
- ✓ Sand Cherry (9000')
- ✓ Cinquefoil (10,000')
- ✓ Skunkbush Sumac (9000')
- ✓ Wood's Rose (10,000')
- ✓ Virginia Creeper
- ✓ Red Osier Dogwood
- ✓ Elderberry



### GROUNDCOVER/PERENNIALS

- ✓ Periwinkle
- ✓ Moss Pink (7500')
- ✓ Snow in Summer (10,000')
- ✓ Blue Flax (8500')

## Fire wise Landscaping/Roberts—4

- ✓ Red Hot Poker (8000')
- ✓ Coreopsis (7000')
- ✓ Creeping Thyme (8500')
- ✓ Wild Strawberry (10,000')
- ✓ Day Lily (8000-10,000')
- ✓ Ice Plant
- ✓ Common Thrift

The afore-mentioned are a few of the fire-resistive plants and trees you should consider when creating your defensible zone of landscaping. Check with your local nursery about additional plants and trees that exhibit fire-resistive traits.

### Useful websites for wildfire information:

- ✓ [www.governor.state.az.us/FHC](http://www.governor.state.az.us/FHC)
- ✓ [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)
- ✓ [www.fs.fed.us/r3/fire](http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/fire)
- ✓ [www.azstatefire.com](http://www.azstatefire.com)
- ✓ [www.fs.fed.us/news/fire](http://www.fs.fed.us/news/fire)
- ✓ [www.fireplan.gov](http://www.fireplan.gov)

