



FIRE-RESISTANT CHOICES FOR YOUR LANDSCAPE

Thoughtful landscaping around the home is essential for reducing risk in the event of a wildland fire. Regular watering and maintenance of your landscape helps create and sustain defensible space around your property.

Although all plants can burn under the right conditions, some are more **FIRE-PRONE** than others, while some are considered more **FIRE-RESISTANT**. Incorporating fire-resistant vegetation, along with proper maintenance, is key to reducing the risk of home loss.



How Wildfire Threatens Homes

Wildfire can impact homes in three primary ways :

- ✓ Direct Contact with Flames
- ✓ Radiant Heat
- ✓ Embers

Burning embers pose the greatest risk. They can be carried high into the air and travel more than a mile ahead of the main fire. When embers land in easily ignitable materials, they can quickly start new fires. Homeowners can significantly reduce their risk through thoughtful landscaping choices and consistent property maintenance

General Maintenance Recommendations

Regular upkeep is essential for reducing wildfire risk.

Key practices include:

- Cleaning roofs and gutters to remove leaves and debris
- Watering plants located near the home
- Raking and removing dry leaves, pine needles, and other debris
- Pruning trees and shrubs to maintain healthy spacing

General Landscaping Guidelines

Firewise landscaping focuses on creating defensible space and reducing fuel sources around the home.

Consider the following:

- Maintain appropriate plant height and spacing
- Incorporate hardscape features such as patios and walkways to serve as firebreaks
- Prevent “ladder fuels” by removing lower branches and spacing vegetation vertically
- Select fire-resistant plants appropriate for each zone around the home



Plant Selection by Fire Zones

Plant selection is a key part of fire-resistant landscaping. Choose plants with fire-resistant characteristics:

- High moisture content in leaves for slower ignition
- Minimal dead or dry material buildup
- Open branching structure
- Low plant density (fewer leaves and branches)
- Slow growth habits requiring less maintenance
- Non-resinous plant material
- Avoidance of highly flammable species such as juniper, pine, spruce, fir, and arborvitae.



Immediate Zone (0–5 feet from structures)



Rock Cress
Aubrieta deltoidea



Hens & Chick
Sempervivum



Kinnikinnick
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi

- Low growing under 2 feet
- Non-woody stems
- Broad leaves
- High moisture content
- Non-resinous material
- Inorganic mulches

Intermediate Zone (5–30 ft from structures)



Rhododendron
Rhododendron



Red Currant
Ribes rubrum



Snowberry
Symphoricarpos albus

- Minimum plant height of 8 feet
- Low plant density
- Slow growing
- High moisture content
- Inorganic fuel breaks

Extended Zone (30–100+ ft from structures)



Maple
Acer palmatum



Serviceberry
Amelanchier alnifolia



Smoke Tree
Cotinus coggygria

- No height restriction
- Open branching structure
- Deciduous trees
- Low and moderately flammable plants



Key Reminder

No plant is completely fireproof. Proper placement, spacing, and regular maintenance are just as important as plant selection. Check with your local garden center to ensure plants are appropriate for your microclimate.

We have compiled resources on this website, including home materials and plant selections, and will update it as more become available. Scan the QR code to access the site:





Resources for Understanding Wildfire Threat

- *National Fire Protection Association Videos on protecting your home*

Part 1:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zx9-pZvKW2U>

Part 2:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyl87I3wqk>

Your Home Can Survive a Wildfire:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vL_syp1ZScM

- *Washington State Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network*

<https://www.fireadaptedwashington.org/>

- *Home Visit Sign-ups*

<https://wildfireready.dnr.wa.gov/>

- *Fire Wise USA*

<https://www.nfpa.org/education-and-research/wildfire/firewise-usa>

- *Forest Resilience Division of Washington State Department of Natural Resources*

<https://dnr.wa.gov/forest-resilience-division>

- *DNR Community Wildfire Resilience Resource Library*

<https://dnr.wa.gov/forest-resilience-division/community-wildfire-resilience-resource-library>



Fire Resistant Landscaping Resources

- *Fire Resistant Plants for Eastern Washington (very comprehensive—check out resources at the end of the document)*
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XdUkmsDpX2C0Ay_f6_rtFeGQC-I7hU6A/view?ts=67e1bc07
- PNW 590: *Fire Resistant Plants for Home Landscapes—Overview (Oregon State University)*
<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pnw-590-fire-resistant-plants-home-landscapes>
- PNW 590: *Fire Resistant Plants for Home Landscapes—Plant List (Oregon State University)*
<https://www.firefree.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Fire-Resistant-Plants.pdf>
- *Fire Resistant Plants for Chelan/Douglas County Washington: A step-by-step guide for choosing the right plant for the right place (WSU Chelan/Douglas Master Gardeners)*
<https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2086/2018/01/fireresistantplants2017.pdf>
- *Fire-Resistant Plants for the Puget Sound Basin*
<https://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/archive-documents/wlr/LANDS/forestry/pdfs/FireResistant.pdf>
- *Beware of ARBORVITAE Plant Torches*
<https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2086/2019/10/arbortitaealternatives.pdf>



WSU Extension Master Gardeners

Pierce County Master Gardeners

- The [Pierce County Master Gardener Program](#)'s mission is to engage university-trained volunteers to empower and sustain diverse communities with relevant, unbiased, research-based horticulture and environmental stewardship education
- <https://extension.wsu.edu/pierce/mg-home/>

Master Gardener Foundation of Pierce County

- A 501(c)(3) nonprofit which raises funds for the financial support of the WSU Extension Master Gardener program in Pierce County.
- <https://piercecounymastergardenerfoundation.org/>

Resources (Ask a Master Gardener, Publications, etc)

- <https://mastergardener.wsu.edu/resources/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/WSUMGProgram>

Pierce County Resources

- Pierce County Alerts
 - <https://www.piercecounywa.gov/921/Pierce-County-ALERT>
- Fire Resistant Gardening/Master Gardeners of Pierce County
 - <https://extension.wsu.edu/pierce/mg-home/>
- King County Conservation District Wildfire Preparedness Program
 - <https://pierccd.org/652/Wildfire-Preparedness>