



UC Marin Master Gardeners

Marin County FIRE-SMART LANDSCAPING

A well-maintained garden designed around defensible space can improve the odds that your home will survive a wildfire.



THE SCIENCE

UC Cooperative Extension provides homeowners with up-to-date science-based information for managing and maintaining landscapes for multiple objectives including fuels and fire management. There are no published fire-wise or fire-resistant plant lists that are science-based or peer-reviewed. Thus, designing and maintaining defensible space is more important than plant selection.

DESIGN DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Create fuel breaks surrounding your house and within your garden. Create space vertically and horizontally via plant placement and pruning. Use hardscape and noncombustible materials around structures and to separate individual plants and groups of plants. Use the right plants in the right places with fire, climate, and water guidelines in mind.

MAINTAIN DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Keep your garden free from dry and dead wood, dry grasses, and leaf litter, especially near any structures. Prune plants to provide horizontal and vertical space around structures and throughout your garden. Eliminate fire ladders. Hydrate plants with a water-wise irrigation system. Mulch safely to conserve water.

ELIMINATE FUEL LADDERS

A grass fire can move up into shrubs and then into trees.



SPACE PLANTS AND TREES

Guidelines are for plant groupings.



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