



*Agapanthus*



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## Fire Safety in the Garden

Many people are getting serious about fire safety around their homes, and having a few basic guidelines for firescaping is helpful. We sourced a number of different publications on fire landscaping and found some common ground for making your home safer.

There are some plants that are known to burn less readily, and we will get into that later, but the most important tool for slowing down a wildfire is reducing fuel—this means keeping the dry grasses down and cleaning out the shrubs and trees of built up dry leaves (usually inside the plant—at it grows and matures). Maintenance can be a nightmare in and of itself, so why not consider renting some goats and organizing a neighborhood clean-up (and BBQ) with a rented chipper!

The Santa Barbara City Fire Department came up with a zone system that is most helpful as a guideline around the home. The zones are numbered 1 through 4 and start at zone 1, around the house. Zone one should be your most irrigated area—a leaf full of water burns very slowly—if at all. This is nice for us too, as it puts the lushest area right where we can see it most. The plants in this zone should be also of the most fire resistant. Keep large trees away from the house; remove volatile species especially, like pine.

Zone two is a fire break and should be low growing ground covers of fire resistant plants such as succulents and other low growing ground covers preferably drought tolerant. This zone should be wide enough to stop a fire—the wider the better, perhaps 25-30 feet.

Zone three should be low growing native shrubs and non-native ornamentals that are thinned and non-combustible. This area can be watered less—so choose water wise plants.

Zone four is well managed native plants thinned of the most flammable types and cleaned of debris yearly. The trees should be limbed up to six feet or more. Any shrubs should be away from the underside of the trees to avoid creating a fire 'ladder'.

One of the most important concepts here is the fire ladder. This is where you have low growing flammables growing next to flammable shrubs growing up into trees, providing a ladder that builds in heat and momentum as it goes. Spacing things out and cleaning dry grasses and materials will take away a fire's momentum—possibly slowing it down enough to manage, in the case of wildfire.

The defensible space guidelines say that you should have at least 100 feet of maintained space around the home, and more if you are on a slope—as fire moves faster and farther upslope. Each of the zones need not be equal in length, but as wide as can be for your property. The fourth zone may be beyond your property, either private or public, and perhaps could be maintained cooperatively with the neighbors or with permission from the land agencies. I bet they won't mind if you help!

*This list and information is a compilation of several publications. We do want to emphasize that this is only a partial suggestion list to be used only as a guide.*

*\*\*List compiled and updated by Monica Felt*

# Fire-Wise Plant Guide

Most of the fire resistant plants have certain qualities and you can judge from these criteria whether they are good candidates. From StopWaste.Org:

- Most are broadleaf deciduous trees, and some thick- leaved evergreen trees.
- Leaves tend to be supple, moist and easily crushed.
- Shrubs are low growing (2') with minimal dead material.
- Tall shrubs are clean, not bushy.

\* denotes native

**Bold Print** denotes deer resistance

<i>Shrubs</i>	<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Zone(s)</i>
Agave Americana	Century Plant	1,3
Aloe arborescens	Torch Aloe	1,3
Aloe aristata	Aloe	1,3
Aloe brevifolia	Aloe	1,3
Artemisia caucasica	Silver Spreader	3
*Artemisia pycnocephala	Sandhill Sage	3
*Atriplex canescens	Saltbush	3
*Atriplex lentiformis	Saltbush	3
Callistemon	Bottlebrush	3
*Ceanothus spp.	Wild Lilac	3
Cistus purpureus	Orchid Rockrose	3
Cistus villosus prostrates	Prostrate Rockrose	3
<b>Convolvulus ssp.</b>	Morning Glory	3
<b>Coprosma</b>	Mirror Plant	3
<b>Cotoneaster</b>	Bearberry	2
<b>Diplacus longifolius</b>	Monkey Flower	3
*Eriodictyon trichocalyx	Hairy Yerba Santa	3
Euonymus fortunei radicans	Winter Creeper	3
<b>Feijoa sellowiana</b>	Pineapple Guava	3
<b>Fremontdendron spp.</b>	Flannel Bus	3
*Galvesia speciosa	Island Bush Snapdragon	3
<b>Helichrysum petiolatum</b>	Licorice Plant	3
<b>Hemerocallis ssp.</b>	Daylily	1
<b>Hesperaloe parviflora</b>	Red Yucca	1,3
<b>Kniphofia uvaria</b>	Red Hot Poker	3
<b>Lantana camara &amp; cultivars</b>	Lantana	3
Ligustrum texanum	Privet	3
Lonicera japonica and other species	Honeysuckle	3
*Mahonia repens	Oregon Grape	3
*Mimulus longiflorus(Diplacus)	Monkey Flower	3
*Myrica californica	Wax Myrtle	3
<b>Nerium oleander</b>	Oleander	3
<b>Pyracantha 'Santa Cruz'</b>	Firethorn	3
<b>Pittosporum tobira</b>	Mock Orange	3
<b>Pittosporum crassifolium</b>	Dwarf Karo	3

## Fire-Wise Plant Guide (cont.)

### *Shrubs*

	<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Zone(s)</i>
<i>Punica granatum</i> ('nana'dwarf)	Pomegranate	3
<i>Rhamnus alaternus</i>	Italian Buckthorn	3
* <i>Rhamnus californica</i>	Coffeeberry	3
* <i>Rhododendron occidentale</i>	Western Azalea	3
* <b><i>Rhus integrifolia</i></b>	Lemonade Berry	3
* <b><i>Ribes viburnifolium</i></b>	Currant	3
* <b><i>Salvia sonomensis</i></b>	Sonoma Sage	3
* <b><i>Solanum xanta</i></b>	Purple Nightshade	3
<b><i>Strelitzia reginae</i></b>	Bird of Paradise	1,3
<i>Tecomaria capensis</i>	Cape Honeysuckle	3
* <b><i>Trichostema lanatum</i></b>	Woolly Blue Curls	3

### *Trees*

	<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Zone</i>
* <b><i>Aesculus californica</i></b>	California Buckeye	4
<b><i>Alnus rhombifolia</i></b>	White Alder	4
<i>Arbutus menziesii</i>	Madrone	4
<i>Arbutus unedo</i>	Strawberry Tree	2
<b><i>Ceratonia siliqua</i></b>	Carob, St. John's Beard	4
* <b><i>Cercis occidentalis</i></b>	Western Redbud	2
<i>Citrus</i> spp., various species	Citrus	3
<i>Fraxinus</i> spp.	Ash	4
<i>Populus</i> spp.	Cottonwood, Poplar	4
<i>Populus tremuloides</i>	Quaking Aspen	4
<i>Prunus</i> spp.	Plum, Peach, Cherry, Apricot	4
<b><i>Quercus agrifolia</i></b>	California Live Oak	All Zones
* <b><i>Schinus molle</i></b>	California/Peruvian Pepper Tree	2
* <b><i>Schinus terebinthifolius</i></b>	Brazilian Pepper Tree	4

### *Perennials*

	<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Zone</i>
<b><i>Achillea millifolium</i></b>	White Yarrow	3
<b><i>Achillea tomentosa</i></b>	Woolly Yarrow	3
<i>Aeonium decorum</i>	Aeonium	2
<i>Agapanthus</i>	Lily of the Nile	1
<b><i>Ajuga reptans</i></b>	Carpet Bugle	1
* <i>Asarum caudatum</i>	Wild Ginger	1
<b><i>Campsis</i></b>	Trumpet Vine	3
<i>Centranthus ruber</i>	Red Valerian, Jupiter's Beard	3
<i>Crassula</i>	Jade Plant	2
<b><i>Dietes bicolor</i></b>	African Iris, Wild Yellow Iris	1,2
<b><i>Dietes vegeta</i></b>	Fortnight Lily	1,2
<b><i>Erigeron karvinskianus</i></b>	Santa Barbara Daisy	1
* <b><i>Eschscholzia californica</i></b>	California Poppy	3
<b><i>Frageria chiloensis</i></b>	Sand Strawberry, Ornamental	2

## Fire-Wise Plant Guide (cont.)

<i>Perennials</i>	<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Zone(s)</i>
Heuchera maxima	Coral Bells	3,4
<b>*Iris douglasiana</b>	Pacific Coast Iris	3
Limonium	Statice	3
Nerine masonorum	Nerine, Bulb	1
Oenothera berlandieri	Mexican Evening Primrose	2
Pelargonium peltatum	Ivy Geranium	2
Phyla nodiflora	Lippia	1
<b>*Salvia sonomensis</b>	Creeping Sage, Sonoma Sage	3
<b>*Sisyrinchium 'Bellum'</b>	Yellow/Blue Eyed Grass	3
*Sisyrinchium californicum	Yellow/Blue Eyed Grass	3
Trachelospermum jasminoides	Star Jasmine	1
<b>Trichostema lanatum</b>	Woolly Blue Curls	3
Trifolium fragiferum	O'Connor's Legume	3
<b>*Zauschneria californica</b>	California Fuschia	2

<i>GroundCovers</i>	<i>Common Name</i>	<i>Zone</i>
<b>Ajuga reptans</b>	Carpet Bugle	1
<b>Armeria maritima</b>	Seathrift	1
<b>Cerastium tomentosum</b>	Snow in Summer	1
Convolvulus ssp.	Morning Glory	2
Cotoneaster	Cotoneaster	3
<b>Dymondia margaretae</b>	Dymondia	2
<b>Festuca rubra</b>	Creeping Red Fescue	1
<b>Gazania ssp.</b>	Trailing/Hummingbird Flower	3
<b>Iberis sempervirens</b>	Candytuft	1
<b>Lampranthus aurantiacus</b>	Ice Plant	2
<b>Liriope</b>	Lily Turf	1
Myoporum parvifolium	Creeping Myoporum	2
Oenothera berlandieri	Mexican Evening Primrose	3
<b>Osteospermum</b>	South African Daisy	2
Phyla nodiflora	Lippia	1
Potentilla tabernaemontanii(syn.verna)	Spring Cinquefoil	1
Sedum ssp.	Stonecrop	2
Senecio kleinia 'mandraliscae'	Blue Ice Plant	2
*Symphoricarpos mollis	Creeping Snowberry	2
<b>Thymus praecox x articus</b>	Mother of Thyme	1
<b>Thymus pseudolanuginosus</b>	Woolly Thyme	1
Trifolium fragiferum	O'Connor's Legume	1
<b>Vinca Minor</b>	Dwarf Running Myrtle	1
<b>*Zauschneria californica</b>	California Fuschia	2

For more information on fire-safe natives go to: [www.laspilitas.com/classes/fire\\_burn\\_times.html](http://www.laspilitas.com/classes/fire_burn_times.html)