

Defensible Space

Every home requires defensible space. Defensible space is the area around the home free from dangerous accumulations of flammable pyrophytic vegetation. This allows firefighters a safe working area from which to defend against an oncoming wildfire.

A Firewise landscape includes LOW pyrophytic plants, shrubs and trees (those less likely to burn and slower to ignite) strategically placed and maintained to resist the spread of fire. It is also a landscape that is maintained free of dead and dry plant materials, with living plants, shrubs and trees properly spaced and managed so they will not serve as ladder fuels during a wildfire.



Make your house one that firefighters can effectively defend. Remove weeds, brush and other pyrophytic vegetation near your home, thereby creating a more fire resistant landscape.

Defensible Space Requirements

Within 15 Feet

Remove pyrophytic plants (Junipers Spanish Broom, etc.) within 15 feet of the structure(s).

Modify single specimen native or pyrophytic plants. Maintain shrubs free from dead branches and twigs.

Remove trees less than 6 inches in diameter within 6 to 8 feet of other larger trees.

Maximum diameter of any one shrub or group of shrubs shall be 15 feet. Spacing requirements of shrubs shall be two times the height of the shrub.

Remove tree branches within 10 feet of a chimney or stovepipe outlet.

Remove dead trees.

More than a cord of firewood less than 10 feet away from a structure shall be covered with a fire resistive fabric.

Maintain any tree, shrub, or plant adjacent to or overhanging a structure, free of dead or dying vegetation.

Within 100 feet

Remove or modify native or pyrophytic plants (Junipers, Spanish Broom, etc.) within 100 feet of the structure(s).

Maintain grasses and weeds to be 4 inches or less in height.

Remove limbs of trees less than 6 feet from the ground. Exception: Deciduous, non-native trees, and Spruce trees that have all forest litter removed from underneath the base of the tree, the height of pruning can be reduced by 50%

If a continuous canopy exists on properties, tree branches are to be removed within 12 to 15 feet of the ground.

Remove pine needles and leaves from the ground that have accumulated in excess of 2 inches in height.

Understanding Pyrophytic

A plant, shrub or tree with HIGH PYROPHYTIC properties means they will ignite easily and burn intensely.

Understanding the characteristics of xeriscape plants, native plants, shrubs and trees, will help determine the correct placement and proper selection of your plants. This will help to make your landscape more fire resistant and help your local firefighters protect your home during the threat of a wildfire.

Pyrophytic Characteristics

HIGH PYROPHYTIC plants, shrubs and trees ignite and burn intensely and typically share certain characteristics:

- 1) They are usually blade-leaf or needle-leaf evergreens
- 2) They have stiff, woody, small or fine, lacy leaves
- 3) Their leaves and wood usually contain volatile waxes, fats, terpenes or oils (crushed leaves have strong odors)
- 4) Their sap is usually gummy, resinous and has a strong odor
- 5) They usually contain plentiful fine, twiggy, dry or dead materials
- 6) They may have "hair" covered leaves
- 7) They may have loose or papery bark
- 8) These plants flame (not smolder) when ignited with a match

For more information on how to make your home more fire resistant, go to

www.kernfiresafe.org

Working Together

We Can Make Kern County

More Fire Safe, Firewise Communities



Get In The Race For Defensible Space

Funding is provided through a CAL FIRE State Responsibility Area Fire Prevention Fund and your local Kern County Fire Department.

Kern County Firewise Planting Guide



(661) 246-3955

kernfiresafe.org

• P.O. Box 6572 Pine Mountain Club, CA 93222-6572

Plants in Kern County

Many xeriscape and native plants, shrubs and trees found in the Kern Mountain Communities are listed here, and are low in pyrophytic properties (they WILL NOT easily ignite or burn intensely).

The xeriscape and native plants, shrubs and trees listed that are in a **RED ITALIC TYPEFACE** & identified with the ***b*** icon are HIGH in PYROPHYTIC PROPERTIES (they WILL easily ignite or burn intensely).

HIGH PYROPHYTIC plants, shrubs and trees should be planted in areas further than 15 feet from a structure, including decks and patios. Maintenance of high pyrophytic plants should include removing all dead plant material. The crowns (lower branches) of shrubs should be raised at least 2 to 3 feet off the ground and limited to a single plant or shrub, unless the shrub is isolated or heavily modified.



Sagebrush

Flowering Perennials

Alum Root
 Beardtongue
 Bergenia
 Blue Catmint
 Buckwheat - Sulphur-flowered
 Buckwheat - Wright's
 Coral Bells
 Daylily
 Dianthus
 Fuchsia - California
 Garden Meadow
 Goldenrod - California
 Hollyhock
 Honeysuckle
 Iris - Bearded
 Jupiter's Beard
 Lamb's Ears
 Lavender
 Mallow - Apricot
 Mint - Coyote
 Mint - Hummingbird
 Mojave Mound
 Penstemon - Beakflowered
 Penstemon - Bumblebee
 Penstemon - Firecracker
 Penstemon - Scarlet
 Phlox - Creeping
 Poppy - California
 Poppy - Oriental
 Poppy - Prickly
 Primrose - California Evening
 Primrose - Fragrant Evening
 Rydberg's Horkelia
 Shasta Daisy
 Wallflower - Western
 Western Blue Flag
 Whirling Butterflies
 Yarrow - Moonshine
 Yarrow - Paprika
 Yarrow - Woolly



Blue Catmint



Whirling Butterflies

Shrubs

Apache Plume
 Blue Mist
 Butterfly Bush
 Currant
 Elderberry
 Gray Santolina (Lavender)
 Honey Suckle Lavender
 Lilac
 Oregon Grape
 Sage - Desert Purple
 Sage - Garden
 Sage - Meadow
 Sage - Rose
 Sage - Russian
 Sage - Silver
 Snowberry
 Wild Rose
Bitter Brush - *b*
Flannel Bush - *b*
Juniper Shrubs (any type) - *b*
Manzanita - Greenleaf - *b*
Mountain Mahogany (Ironwood) - *b*
Mountain Whitethorn - *b*
Sagebrush - *b*
Serviceberry - *t*

Ground Cover

Coral Bells
 Dwarf Periwinkle
 Ivy Geranium
 Sandwort
 Strawberries
 Sweet Alyssum
 Trailing Ganzania
 Wolly Yarrow



Coral Bells

Trees

Black Oak
 Colorado Blue Spruce
 Cherry Plum
 Flowering Crab Apple
 Freeman Maple Tree
 Quaking Aspen
Incense Cedar - *t*
Jeffrey Pine - *t*
Juniper - (all types, including Western Juniper) *t*
Leyland Cypress - *t*
Pinyon Pine - *t*
White Fir - *t*



Cherry Plum Tree

**TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR DEFENSIBLE SPACE BY
 LIMBING YOUR TREES**
 The Spacing Between Grass, Shrubs, and Trees
 is Crucial to Reduce the Spread of Wildfires.

