

**Advice to Grow By
... Ask Us!**

**UCCE Master Gardeners
San Mateo & San Francisco Counties**

Wildfire Safety Protect Your Home!

**Presented by UC Master Gardeners of
San Mateo and San Francisco Counties**



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San Mateo and San Francisco Counties

Defensible Space – Zone 0 – 0-5 Feet

The Ember Resistant/ Noncombustible Zone



Photo – Lisa Erdos

- Implement on all sides of the home
- Use rock mulch, hardscape, mowed green lawn
- Less focus on plant lists more focus on placement and maintenance

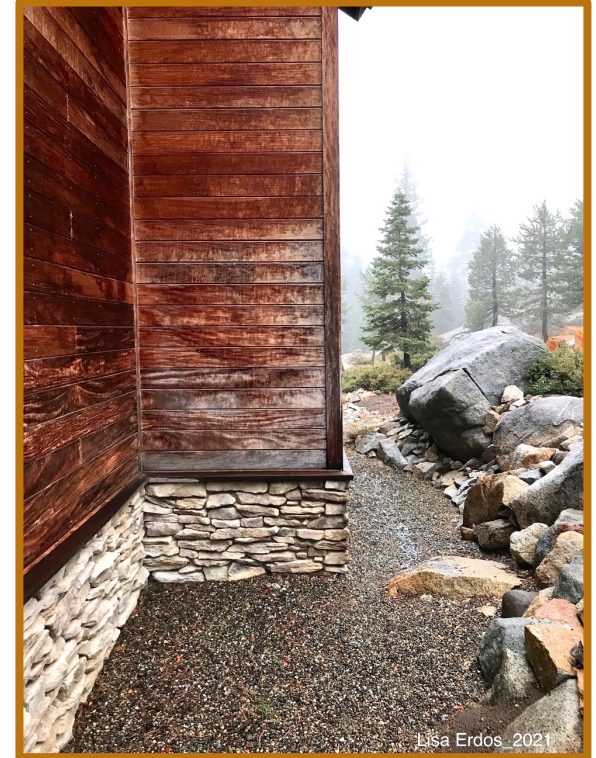


Photo – Lisa Erdos



Defensible Space – Zone 1 – 5-30 Feet

- **LEAN** - There is a small amount of vegetation present.
- **CLEAN** - Vegetative debris and dead materials are routinely removed.
- **GREEN** - Vegetation within this zone is kept green and well irrigated during the fire season.

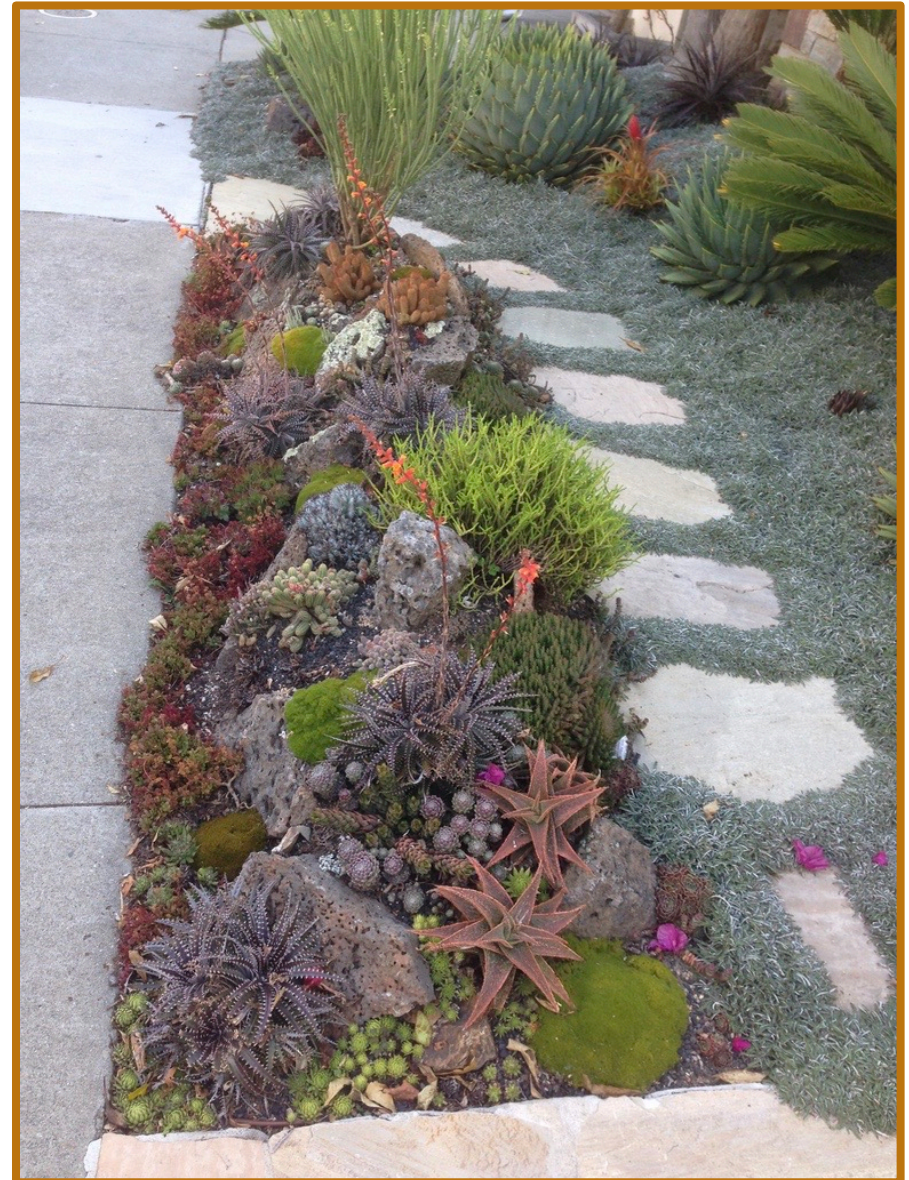


Photo – Lisa Erdos

Defensible Space – Zone 2 – 30-100 Feet

The Reduced Fuel Zone

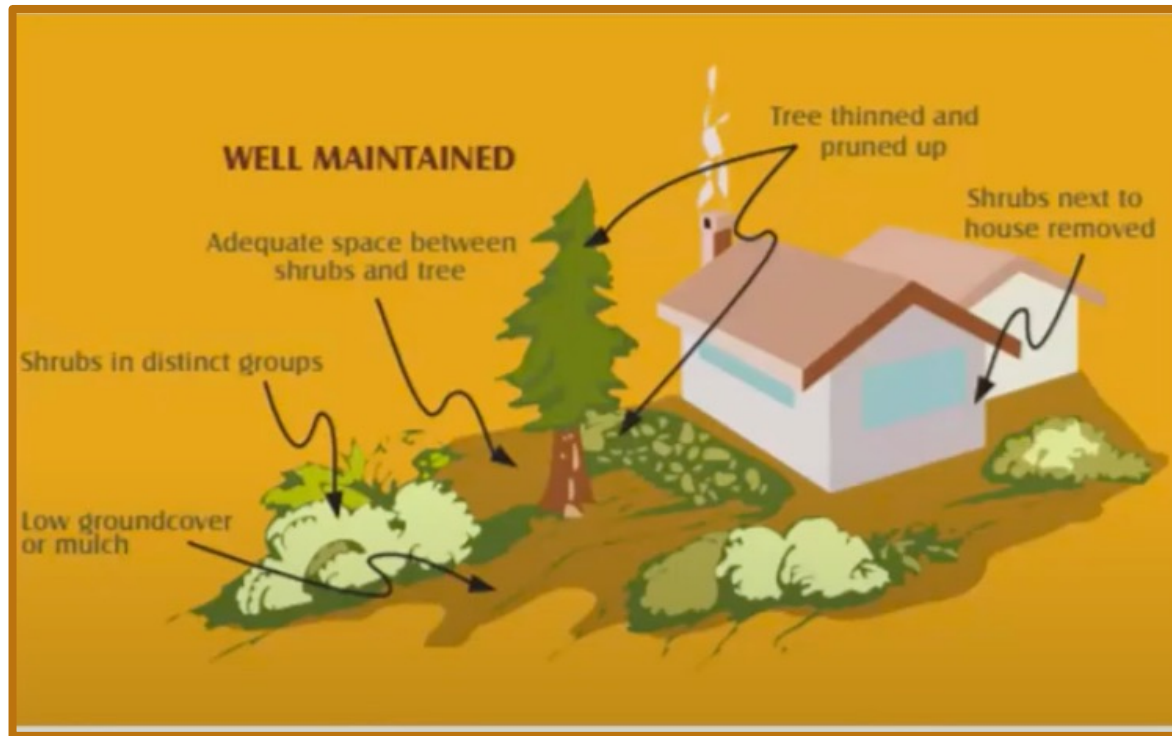


Photo
Yana Valachovic
Humboldt County

- Create islands of vegetation
- Thin and prune taller vegetation
- Use mounds to create visual cover

Soil for Zones 5-30 feet and Beyond

Healthy Soil Is Important!

- Amend Garden soil with compost - Organic Matter
- Compost ABSORBS water and HOLDS Water in soil.
- Compost is rich in slow-release nutrients allowing plants to establish quickly and GROW bigger roots with less fertilizers and water.

Photo-Keir Morse, 2009



Small flowered Melica
Melica imperfecta

Photo-Calscape, 2010



Foothill Penstemon
Penstemon heterophyllus

Photo-Neal Kramer, 2009



Western Sword Fern
Polystichum munitum



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Mulch

0-5 feet Recommendations:

- All the mulch treatments tested are combustible and not recommended for use within 5 feet of the house or other structures.
- Use noncombustible rock, gravel, concrete and pavers within 5 feet of the house.



Photo-C. Nations



Mulch

5-30 feet and Beyond Recommendations:

- After you add compost to your garden beds or pots, add mulch, a thin layer of wood chips, about 1 inch deep around the dripline of plants. This is the least flammable mulch application.
- As wood chips decompose, they will hold in moisture, resulting in less water use.
- Wood Chips suppress weed growth and feed the soil resulting in healthier roots and plants
- Mulch and compost together help plants survive drought, wind, and wildfires.



Photo-UCANR

Taking care of the soil
is important given:
Climate Change
Less Rain
Longer Wildfire
Seasons

Compost and mulch
can be applied 2-3 x
per year.



Photos-Lisa Erdos

Fire Resistant Plant Characteristics

The physical characteristics of a plant determine whether a plant will catch on fire, keep a fire going, and then propel a fire.

Fire resistant plants share certain physical characteristics:

- **Deciduous plants** less flammable than evergreens
- **Broadleaf plants** less flammable than those with needle and blade like leaves
- **Moist and easily bent leaves** less flammable than stiff and leather like leaves
- **Thick leaves** less flammable than fine or thin leaves



Photo-Cynthia Nations

Fire Resistant Plant Characteristics

Fire resistant plants share certain physical characteristics

- Plants that produce a low amount of litter less flammable than those that produce a lot of litter
- Plants with sap that looks more like water less flammable than plants with thick, gummy, or resinous sap
- Plants without fragrance less flammable than plants with aromatic qualities
- Plants with silver or gray leaves with high mineral and ash content less flammable than those without (Some plants, like the highly ignitable native fragrant sages, do not follow this rule.)
- Plant leaves without hair (cilia) less flammable than those with hair



Fire Resistant Plant Characteristics

Summary

- Store water in leaves or stems
- Produce very little dead or fine material
- Possess extensive, deep root systems for controlling erosion
- Maintain high moisture content with limited watering
- Grows slowly and needs little maintenance
- Are low growing in form
- Contain low levels of volatile oils or resins
- Have an open, loose branching habit with a low volume of total vegetation



Annual-Red Maids
Calandrinia menziesii
Photo-Joe Decruyenaere, 2008

Annual-Tidy Tips
Layla platygloss
Photo-Sen A. O'Hara, 2008



Mariposa Lily
Calochortus venustus
Photo-Lynn Watson, 2006

Fire Resistant Plant Examples

Photo-Pixabay
Bobby dazler100



Groundcover – Clumping Gazania
Gazania 'Clumping'.

Photo-Pixabay
Albrecht Fietz



Perennial – Lupine
Lupinus spp.

Photo-Cynthia Nations



Fruit Trees – Apple, Apricot, Cherry,
Lemon, Lime, Nectarine, Orange, Pear
Persimmon, Plum, Prune, Tangerine



Shrub – Mirror Plant
Coprosma spp.

Photo-CA Academy of
Sciences, 2010



Perennial-California Poppy
Eschscholzia californica

Photo-Calscape, 2010

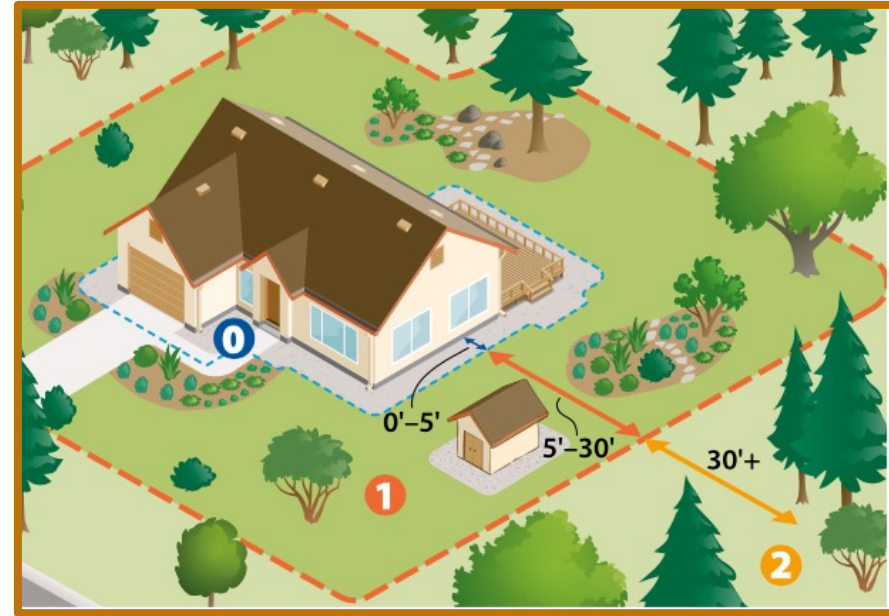


Deciduous Tree-Western
Redbud *Cercis occidentalis*

Firewise Landscaping: Protect Your Home!



Before



Photos-UCANR

After



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Protecting Your Neighborhood

If you don't own a 100-ft zone or more around the house: Prioritize implementing the recommended actions under Zone 0 and 1.

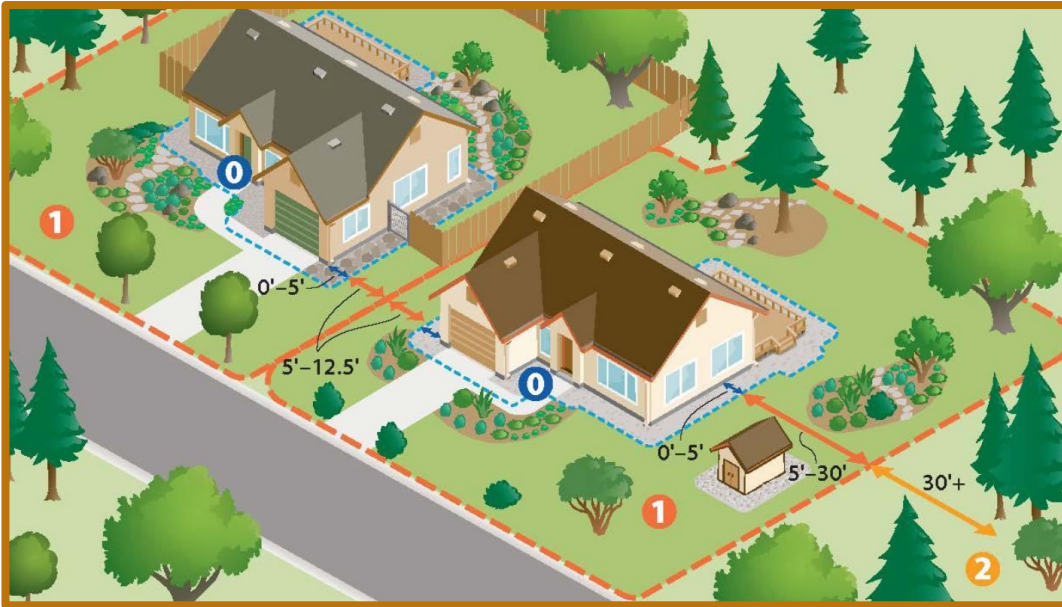


Photo-UCANR



Photo-Cynthia Nations

Neighboring
Overgrown
Trees



Photo-Cynthia Nations

Overgrown
Trees and
Shrubs on
Roof



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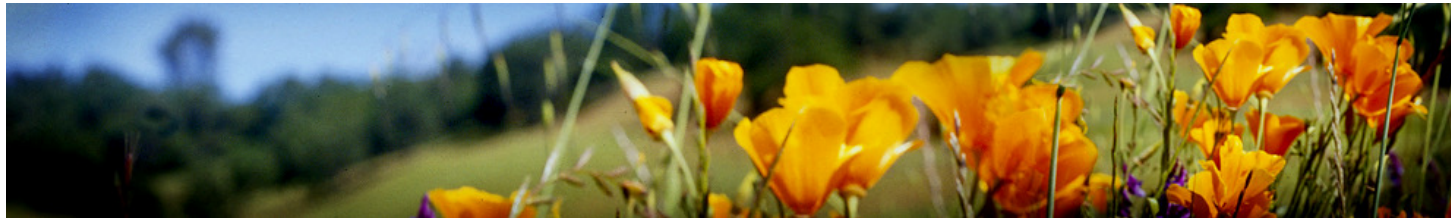
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Call our helpline at: (650) 276-7430

Email questions to: mgsmsf@ucanr.edu (please include your name, city, phone # (best time to call), question/description of problem, photos)

When our helpline offices reopen, visit us in three locations (closed on holidays). If bringing samples, please enclose in a sealed container.

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1500 Purisima Creek Road
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