

Ask a UC Master Gardener



Landscaping Tips to Help Defend Your Home from Wildfire

Through proper planning, you can have both a beautiful landscape and a fire safe zone around your home.

Begin by creating and maintaining a *Defensible Space* of 100 feet around your home that includes:

- A **Lean, Clean, and Green Zone** of 30 feet, **plus**
- A **Reduced Fuel Zone** of 70 feet

Note: Even greater defense zone widths are necessary when your home is on a steep slope or in a windswept area.

Please contact your local master gardener for more information <http://camastergardeners.ucdavis.edu>

We gratefully acknowledge support for this project from the *Elvenia J. Slosson Research Endowment for Ornamental Horticulture*.



Content for this publication was excerpted from: *Home Landscaping for Fire*, ANR Publication 8228, Glenn Nader, Gary Nakamura, Mike De Lasaux, Steve Quarles, Yana Valachovic; *Why 100 Feet? Make Your Home Fire Safe*, and *Homeowners Checklist – How to Make Your Home Fire Safe*, California Department of Fire Protection (CDF).

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October 2007 MG_07.2.1



Create a Defensible Space of 100 Feet Around Your Home

First, create a Lean, Clean, and Green Zone

by removing all flammable vegetation and combustible materials within 30 feet immediately surrounding your home.

- Keep trees trimmed at least 10 feet from chimneys and remove dead branches hanging over structures.
- Remove build-up of needles and leaves from roof and gutters.
- Remove dead and dying plants, fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, pods, small branches, etc.
- Regular maintenance (pruning, weed control, adequate irrigation) is necessary to maintain the fire resistance of your landscape.
- Increase spacing between plants.
- Landscape with fire resistant plants – low growing, open structured, and less resinous.
- When clearing vegetation use care in operating equipment such as lawnmowers.



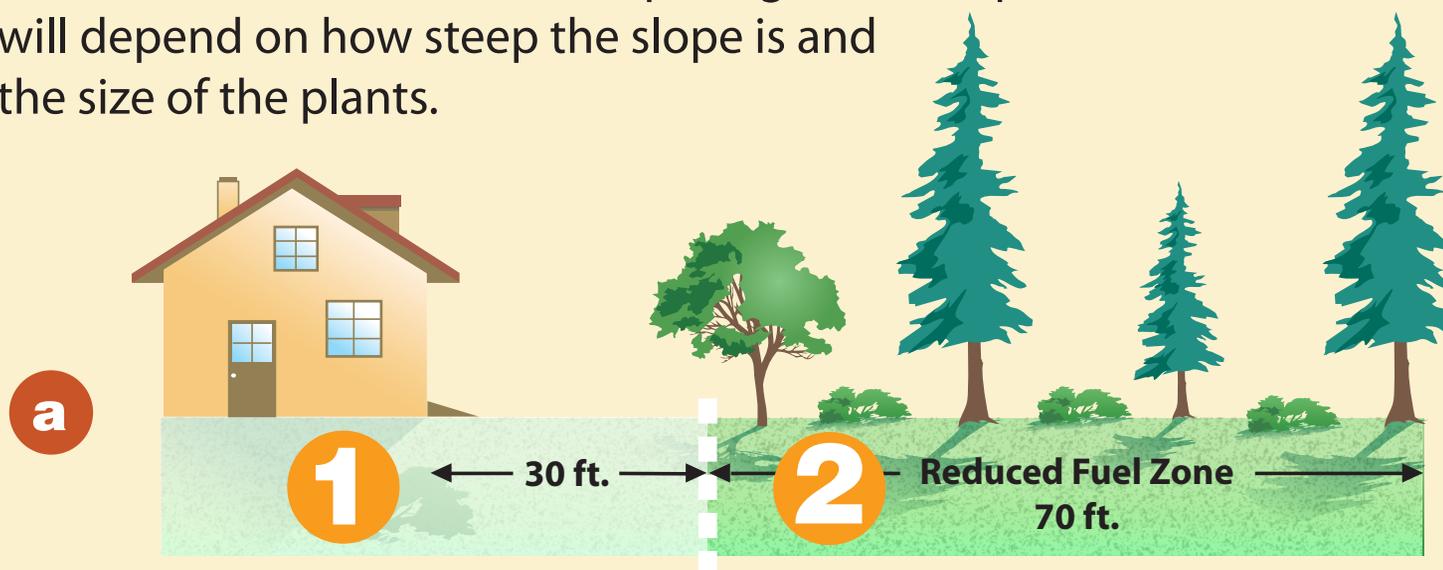
Create a Defensible Space of 100 Feet Around Your Home

Next, create a **Reduced Fuel Zone**

adjacent to your *home defense zone*, extending out at least an additional 70 feet, or to your property line. Greater defense zone widths are necessary when your home is on a steep slope or in a windswept area.

Open space between plants improves the chance of stopping a wildfire. You have two options:

- a) Create horizontal and vertical spacing between plants. The amount of space will depend on how steep the slope is and the size of the plants.



- b) Large trees do not have to be cut and removed, but plants growing beneath them that are greater than 4 inches in height should be removed. Remove lower limbs of trees to at least 6 feet, up to 15 feet (or the lower 1/3 of branches on smaller trees).

