



Fire-Resistant Plants for Oregon Home Landscapes

*Suggesting specific
types of vegetation
that may reduce your
risk from wildfire.*

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Introduction

Oregon has many wildfire prone areas.

In these places, fires are a natural part of the changing landscape. As homes are built in these areas, special precautions must be taken by the homeowner to protect their property. Installation of fire-resistive roofing is critical to preventing firebrands from igniting the home from a roof fire. Well maintained fire-resistant vegetation and irrigated landscape is also critical within close proximity of a home. These actions DO NOT insure that your home will survive a wildfire, but they provide for a good chance of structural survival. Implementation of FireFree [www.firefree.org] and FireWise [www.firewise.org] activities can also significantly improve chances of a home surviving a wildfire.



Fire-resistant vegetation.

When landscaping around a home, most homeowners are interested in creating a landscape that is aesthetically pleasing, compliments their home, and has variations in color, texture, flowers, and foliage. If your home is located in or adjacent to forests or rangeland, you should also consider the flammability of plants within your home landscape.

Flammable plant material in your landscape can increase the fire-risk around your home. The 1991 Oakland Hills Fire in California is a prime example of how flammable plant material (Eucalyptus trees) can act as fuel and contribute to the intensity of a wildfire. Over 3,000 homes were destroyed in that devastating wildfire.

Taking action.

Homeowners should take active steps to minimize or reduce the fuel and fire-hazard around their homes, *including* planting fire-resistant plants. Good placement and on-going maintenance of fire-resistant trees, for example, can, in fact, help protect your home by blocking intense heat.

[See Figure 1, next page]

Making choices.

There is a wide array of trees and other plants to choose for your landscape that are both attractive and fire-resistant. This publication provides a diverse list of plant material divided into perennials, groundcovers, trees, and shrubs.

Annuals.

Annuals can be part of a fire-resistant landscape if well watered and well maintained. We have not listed each of these due to the large number of annuals available to the homeowner.

Turf.

A well maintained lawn can be included in a fire-resistant landscape and serves well as an effective fuel break (See photo). For more information on lawn care and maintenance, check out available publications from your local OSU Extension Service.

A Caution About Bark Mulch.

Bark mulch is often used in home landscapes. However, fire brands from a wildfire and cigarettes can ignite dry bark mulch, conveying the fire to your home. If you landscape with bark mulch up against your home, make sure it remains moist to prevent ignition.

What are **fire-resistant** plants?

Fire-resistant plants are plants that don't readily ignite from a flame or other ignition sources. Although fire-resistant plants can be damaged or even killed by fire, their foliage and stems don't contribute significantly to the fuel and, therefore, the fire's intensity.

Fire Resistant does not mean fire proof.

Plants that are fire-resistant have the following characteristics:

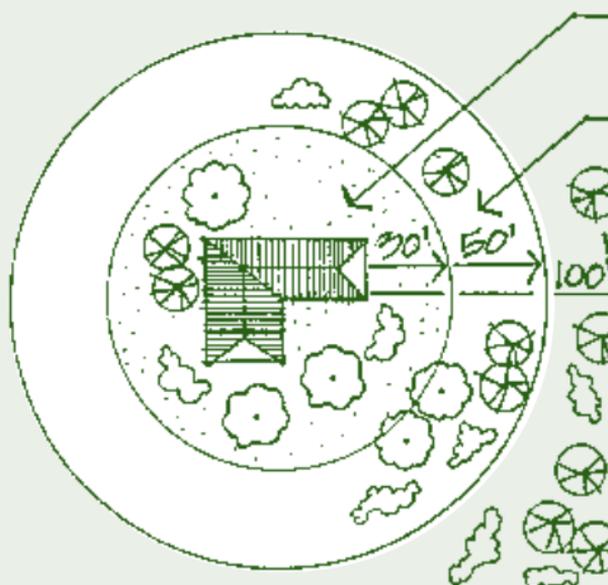
- ❑ Leaves are moist and supple.
- ❑ Plants have little dead wood and tend not to accumulate dry, dead material within the plant.
- ❑ Sap is water-like and does not have a strong odor.

Most deciduous trees and shrubs are fire-resistant. However, **it's important to remember that even fire-resistant plants can burn**, particularly if they are not maintained in a healthy condition.

Figure 1



CONCEPT FOR FIRE PROT



In contrast, plants that are **highly flammable** have these general characteristics:

- Contain fine, dry or dead material within the plant such as twigs, needles, and leaves.
- Leaves, twigs, and stems contain volatile waxes, terpenes, or oils.
- Leaves are aromatic (strong smell when crushed)
- Sap is gummy, resinous and has a strong odor.
- May have loose or papery bark.

Both ornamental and native plants can be highly flammable. An example of a highly flammable ornamental shrub often planted in home landscapes is ornamental juniper. Examples of highly flammable native shrubs include bitterbrush, manzanita, sagebrush, and ceanothus. **Avoid planting these plants around your home.**

-Adapted from University of California Cooperative Extension Hortscript, 1996, No. 18.



PROTECTION VEGETATION ZONES

IRRIGATED
FIRE-RESISTANT PLANTS ZONE

TRANSITION
FIRE-RESISTANT PLANTS ZONE

NON-IRRIGATED
MAINTAINED NATIVE PLANTS ZONE

Illustration by Robin Lee Gyorgyfalvy

How this list was developed

This list was developed by evaluating fire-resistant plant lists developed for other regions and screening the scientific literature on plant flammability. Included in this list are plants adapted to grow *in* Oregon in either irrigated or non-irrigated landscapes. However, most of the plants on this list require some level of irrigation to survive during the dry summer months, particularly in central and eastern Oregon.

The plants in this publication are adaptable in **all regions** of Oregon **unless otherwise marked** with an identifying orange symbol. Plants marked with these symbols are suitable only for the regions specified.

KEY:

- C** = Central Oregon
- E** = Eastern Oregon
- S** = Southern Oregon
- W** = Western Oregon

- * Before deciding on which plants to purchase for your yard, please check with your homeowners association landscape review committee.

Disclaimer

The purpose of this document is to provide homeowners with guidance on ways to landscape their property with fire resistant vegetation to help reduce losses from wildfire damage. It contains suggestions and recommendations based on professional judgment, experience and research and is intended to serve only as a guide. The authors, contributors and publisher disclaim all warranties and guarantees with respect to the information in the document and assume no liability or responsibility with respect to the information.

Groundcovers



Ajuga reptans
Carpet Bugleweed



Delosperma cooperi
Purple/Pink Iceplant



Arctostaphylos uva-ursi
Kinnikinnick



Duchesnea indica
Mock Strawberry

C
E
S



Ceanothus prostratus
Squaw Carpet



Echeveria species
Hens and Chicks



Cerastium tomentosum
Snow-in-Summer



Fragaria species
Wild Strawberry



Delosperma nubigenum
Yellow Iceplant



Pachysandra terminalis
Japanese Pachysandra

S
W

Groundcovers



Phlox subulata
Creeping Phlox



Thymus praecox
Creeping Thyme



Sedum species
Sedum or Stonecrops



Vinca minor
Periwinkle

C
E

Perennials



Achillea species
Yarrow



Armeria maritima
Sea Thrift



Allium schoenoprasum
Chives

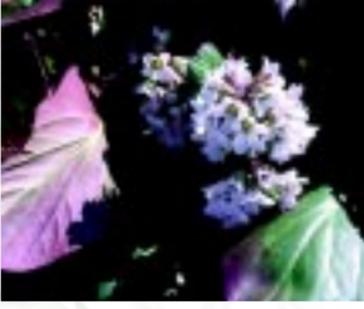


Aurinia saxatilis
Basket-of-Gold

C = Central Oregon

E = Eastern Oregon

Perennials



Bergenia cordifolia
Heartleaf Bergenia



Helianthemum nummularium
Sun Rose



Carex species
Sedges



Hemorocallis hybrids
Daylilies



Coreopsis species
Coreopsis



Heuchera species
Coral Bells



Epilobium angustifolium
Fireweed



Hosta species
Hosta Lilies



Geranium species
Cranesbill



Iris species
Iris

S = Southern Oregon

W = Western Oregon

Perennials



Kniphofia uvuria
Red-hot Poker



Oenothera missouriensis
Evening Primrose
Ozark Sundrops



Linum perenne
Blue Flax



Penstemon species
Penstemon



Lupinus species
Lupine



Stachys byzantina
Lamb's Ear

C = Central Oregon

E = Eastern Oregon

Shrubs-broadleaf evergreen



Cotoneaster species
Cotoneaster



Mahonia repens
Creeping Holly



Daphne x burkwoodii
var. 'Carol Mackie'
Carol Mackie Daphne



Pachystima myrsinites
Oregon Boxwood

S
W



Gaultheria shallon
Salal

S
W



Rhododendron
macrophyllum
Pacific Rhododendron



Ligustrum species
Privet

S
W



Rhododendron
occidentale
Western Azalea



Mahonia aquifolium
Oregon Grapeholly



Yucca species
Yucca

S = Southern Oregon **W** = Western Oregon

Shrubs - deciduous



Acer circinatum
Vine Maple



Cornus stolonifera
Redosier Dogwood



Acer glabrum
Rocky Mountain Maple



Euonymus alatus
Burning Bush



Amelanchier alnifolia
Pacific Serviceberry



Holodiscus discolor
Oceanspray

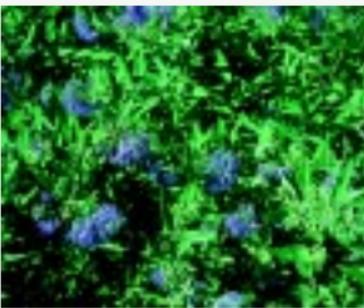
C
E



Buddleia davidii
Butterfly Bush



Philadelphus species
Mockorange



Caryopteris x clandonensis
Blue Mist Spirea



Rhus species
Sumac

C = Central Oregon

E = Eastern Oregon

Shrubs - deciduous



Ribes species
Flowering Currant



Spiraea douglasii
Western Spirea



Rosa woodsii
Wood's Rose



Symphoricarpos albus
Snowberry



Spiraea x bumalda
'Goldflame'
Goldflame Spirea



Syringa species
Lilac

Trees - conifer



Larix occidentalis
Western Larch



Pinus lambertiana
Sugar Pine¹

S = Southern Oregon

W = Western Oregon

Trees - conifer



Pinus contorta
var. murrayana
Lodgepole Pine ¹



Pinus ponderosa
Ponderosa Pine

1. - Foliage is moderately resistant to fire.

Trees - deciduous

S
W



Acer macrophyllum
Bigleaf Maple



Acer rubrum
var. 'Sunset'
Sunset Maple



Acer platanoides
Norway Maple



Aesculus hippocastanum
Horsechestnut

S
W



Alnus rubra
Red Alder



Cercis canadensis
Eastern Redbud

C = Central Oregon

E = Eastern Oregon

Trees - deciduous

C
E



Alnus tenuifolia
Mountain Alder

S
W



Cornus florida
Flowering Dogwood



Betula species
Birch



Fagus species
Beech



Catalpa speciosa
Western Catalpa



Fraxinus species
Ash



Celtis occidentalis
Common Hackberry



Gleditsia triacanthos
Honeylocust



Gymnocladus dioica
Kentucky Coffee Tree



Prunus virginiana
Chokecherry

S = Southern Oregon

W = Western Oregon

Trees - deciduous



Juglans species
Walnut



S
W

Quercus garryana
Oregon White Oak

S
W



Liquidambar styraciflua
American Sweetgum



Quercus palustris
Pin Oak



Malus species
Crabapple



Quercus rubra
Red Oak



Populus species
Aspen/Cottonwoods



Robinia pseudoacacia
Black Locust



Salix species
Willow



Sorbus aucuparia
European Mountain Ash

Notes

Plant descriptions and availability

For a detailed description of the plants on this list, consult local nurseries or refer to the Sunset Western Garden Book and the A-Z Encyclopedia of Garden Plants. These publications can be obtained at local bookstores or nurseries. If you are unable to find some of these plants locally, check out the Oregon Association of Nurserymen's website for plant availability at:

<http://www.nurseryguide.com>

Scroll down to "Search For..." and click on Plants by Name. Type in the name of the plant you're interested in and the search will give you a list of nurseries that carry the plant.

Help us identify other fire-resistant plants

If you know of other fire-resistant plants suitable for Oregon, let us know. We will research your plant and, if it fits the criteria, we will add it to the list.

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The Oregon State University Extension Service provides “research-based” information to Oregonians in the areas of Agriculture, Forestry, Family and Community Development, 4H and Youth Development, and Marine and Watershed Resources.

Additional Useful Websites:

www.firewise.org
www.firefree.org
www.odf.state.or.us
www.deschutesimpact.org



“SUSTAINING A FUTURE”