BASIC CONCEPTS

• All vegetation is potential fuel for a fire.
  • There are no “fireproof” plants.
  • The type, amount, and placement of vegetation can have a dramatic effect on fire behavior.

• Survivable space is the area extending outward from your home.
  • The first 5-10 should be free of vegetation.
  • Survivable space extends out 100 feet from structure.
  • Steeper slopes could have a survivable space as far out as 200 feet.
PLANT CHOICE

• Select plants with a low flammability rating for the areas closest to your home.
  • Grow without accumulating large amounts of combustible dead branches, needles, or leaves.
  • Open, loose branches with a low volume of total vegetation.
  • Low sap or resin content.
  • High moisture content.
  • Grow slowly and need little maintenance, such as pruning.
  • For grasses, short and grow close to the ground.
  • Ability to resprout following fire.

• Plant a wide variety of plants to reduce insect and disease issues.
Plant Flammability

- Ignitability - the length of time it takes a plant to ignite once it’s exposed to a flame or heat source.

- Sustainability - the length of time that a plant will continue to burn once it has caught fire.

- Combustibility - how rapidly or intensely a plant burns; the amount of heat given off during burning.

- Consumability - how completely the plant burns, or the quantity of the plant material that is consumed by the fire.
Tall trees with Low Flammability Rating

- Hickory
- Persimmon
- Blackgum
- Black cherry
- White Oak
- Sourwood
- Red Maple
- Green Ash
- Yellow Poplar
Small trees and shrubs with Low Flammability Rating

- Alder
- Devil’s walking stick
- Pawpaw
- Ironwood
- Flowering dogwood
- Witch hazel
- Red mulberry
- Sumac
- Elderberry
Small shrubs with Low Flammability Rating

- New Jersey tea
- Buttonbush
- Strawberrybush
- Spicebush
- Red chokeberry
- Deerberry
- Lowbush blueberry
- Arrowwood
- Wild Raisin
Herbs & flowers with Low Flammability Rating

• Jack-in-the-pulpit
• Mistflower
• Jewelweed
• Carolina phlox
• Fire pink
• Bird-foot violet
• Bluets
• Joe-pye-weed
• Christmas fern
What not to plant - High Flammability Rating

- American holly
- Cedar
- Pine
- Wax myrtle
- Mtn. laurel
- Rhododendron
- Doghobble

Many of these have thick, waxy leaves, or highly combustible needles. Heavy amounts of accumulating debris, with tight branches and high volumes.
Plant Health & Maintenance

• Your landscape can lose its low flammability properties over time, if not properly maintained.

• You must conduct seasonal maintenance activities to keep your firescape functioning as intended.
Plant Health & Maintenance

• Cut and remove dead/dried foliage.

• Dispose of plant litter as it builds up seasonally.
  • Especially around home/buildings, under/on decks, gutters/roofs, etc.

• Trim grass regularly to a low height.

• Prune trees to 10 feet above the ground.
  • But maintaining a minimum 2:1 canopy to trunk ratio.

• Keep vegetation from encroaching on powerlines, chimneys, or the home itself.
Plant Health & Maintenance

- Monitor plants for stress, pests, or diseases.
- Be familiar with common plant health issues for your area/species.