

Best practices

Disaster Mitigation Working in California



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GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES



FEMA

Fire and Drought-Resistant Landscaping Brings Safety



but the wind-driven embers and sparks were stopped by her stucco walls and tile roof. "I had no wood showing, so the house is still there." The Woolsey Fire killed three people and destroyed 1,643 structures in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties, and prompted the evacuation of more than 295,000 people. It also destroyed the soil-anchoring vege-



Fire-resistant landscaping works!

Malibu, CA In November 2018, the Woolsey Fire raced down a steep ravine toward Olivia Magana's Pacific Coast Highway neighborhood. Luckily, she heeded the notice to evacuate immediately. Olivia knew the blaze would test all her planning and preparation, which included the decision to build her home with fire-resistant materials. She also spent years nurturing a landscape of cactus and a variety other fire and drought-resistant plants and trees.

Upon returning to the neighborhood, Olivia was greatly relieved to find that her home was spared, but also sad for the losses of so many neighbors.

"My beautiful bougainvillea is gone" she reported, "but the rest of the plants survived." She noticed burn areas throughout her property,



Magana fire-resistant home

tation of 96,949 acres of land. As a result, residents in the area face a much higher risk of damage from flash flooding and destructive mud and debris flows.

Olivia wants to act to prevent future damage. "We'll need to maintain the ravine that's behind the fence," she says. "There's a lot of work to do."

People who live in, near or downstream of areas burned by wildfire

Lemon and grapefruit trees survive

are urged to contact their insurance agent to review policies or purchase flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program. Structure and contents coverage are available for homeowners, businesses and renters.



Areas burned in Woolsey Fire now at risk for flash-flooding, mud and debris flow



FIRE-RESISTANT PLANTS FOR HOME LANDSCAPES

Selecting plants that may reduce your risk from wildfire



Plant information from Project

Wildfire: Fire-resistant plants are those that do not readily ignite from a flame or other ignition sources, such as embers. These plants can be damaged or even killed by fire; however, their foliage and stems do not significantly contribute to the fuel and, therefore, the fire's intensity. There are several other significant factors that influence the fire characteristics of plants, including plant moisture content, age, total volume, dead material, and chemical content.

BUT fire-resistant does not mean

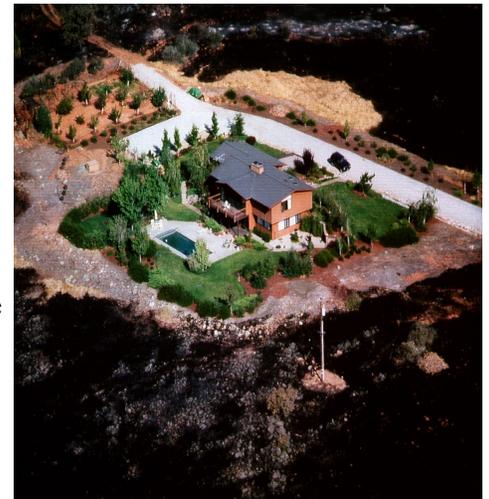
fireproof. Even if you have fire-resistant plants in your landscaping be sure to keep them irrigated and maintained.

Fire-resistant plants typically 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.
- The sap is water-like and does not have a strong odor.
- Sap or resin materials are low.

Using fire-resistant plants play a critical role in the creation and maintenance of your defensible space. As more homes are built in the wildland-urban interface (WUI), residents must take special precautions to protect their lives, homes, and property. One way to do this is to create a defensible space around your home. This is the area between your home or other structures, where potential fuel (materials or vegetation) has been modified, reduced, or cleared to create a barrier and slow the spread of wildfire toward your home.

With adequate defensible space, your home has an 85%-90% chance of surviving a wildfire without anyone needing to be there to intervene. A clear defensible space also allows room for firefighters to fight the fire safely if they are able to access your home. Three critical steps in creating a defensible space include using fire-resistant building materials (for example, roofing materials), reducing wildland fuels around the home, and using fire-resistant plant material in the landscape.



Defensible space landscaping

More Information:

National Fire Protection Association / Firewise USA

www.nfpa.org

The National Flood Insurance Program

<https://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program>

Project Wildfire

www.projectwildfire.org

Publication # 468 At home in the Woods—Lessons Learned in the Wildland /Urban Interface

https://www.fema.gov/pdf/library/woods/athome_woods.pdf

Home Builder's Guide to Construction in Wildfire Zones

<https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/15962>

Ventura County Fire Department—Fire Hazard Reduction Program Plant Reference Guide

<http://vcfd.org/images/FHRP/PlantReferenceGuide.pdf>