

Fire-Smart Planting

www.firesafemarin.org/plants

Fire-Smart planting requires choosing the right plants, removing or avoiding some fire-hazardous varieties, and regular maintenance. Remember: all plants will burn without proper irrigation and maintenance!

Choose Fire-Smart Natives

Marin native plants have ecological benefits and many make good choices in fire-resistant landscaping. Keep native plants well hydrated and prune regularly to remove dead material.

Separation & Islands

Create "islands" to separate groups of plants. Don't plant within 5' of buildings. Consider how large plants will be at maturity.

Pollinators

Choose Fire-Smart plants that attract and support bees and butterflies to create biodiverse, healthy, natural landscaping.

Selecting Trees

Trees require extra care when choosing species and location. Select broad-leaf, native trees when possible. Consider the size of the tree at maturity. Look for hazards when selecting a site for a new tree - never plant a tree that might grow into power-lines or touch or overhang structures when it's full-grown. Conifers may be more fire-hazardous than deciduous, broad-leafed varieties, but most trees can be relatively fire-resistant with careful pruning and limbing.

Learn more and choose Fire-Smart plant varieties at www.firesafemarin.org/plants

Mulches

Use only gravel mulch within 5' of structures. From 5' to 30', use compost or heavy bark or wood chip mulches greater than 1/2" diameter. Avoid fine or shredded bark - it's highly combustible and ignites easily from embers.



FIRE HAZARDOUS PLANTS

Certain shrubs and trees like juniper, cypress, pampas & jubata grasses, bamboo, and acacias are more likely to contribute to fire-hazardous conditions. Replace with fire-smart plants.



EVACUATION PREPAREDNESS

Prepare in Advance & Leave Early!

www.firesafemarin.org/evacuation

Prepare long before a fire strikes: register for both Alert Marin & Nixle; assemble a "Go Kit" for each family member and pet; train your family; keep a change of cotton or wool clothing and sturdy boots ready to wear while evacuating. Your car should be your first choice to quickly evacuate to wide, open areas near the valley floor. Don't panic in traffic! If trapped, sheltering in a building or car is often safer than being exposed on foot.

1. PREPARE IN ADVANCE

Prepare yourself, your family, your pets, and your home. Register for alerts. Pack a "Go Kit" for everyone (including pets). Create defensible space, and harden your home. Complete a Family Communications Plan and practice regularly.

2. MONITOR CONDITIONS

Monitor weather and local fire conditions to understand when risk is highest. During "Red Flag Warnings," take steps to prepare: review your evacuation checklist; double-check your Go Kit; charge your phones; monitor TV & radio.

3. LEAVE EARLY

If a fire is burning nearby (especially during a Red Flag Warning), dress appropriately and prepare to evacuate. Allow firefighters time and access to respond. Leave immediately if ordered, if conditions change, or you feel unsafe or unsure.

4. STAY CALM

Take the fastest & most protected route to a valley floor. Carpool! Stay in your car or a refuge area if trapped. Don't panic in traffic! A wide road on the valley floor is one of the safest places you can be. Monitor AM/FM news radio.

WILDFIRE & EMERGENCY "GO KIT"

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Full coverage goggles, N95 respirator, leather gloves, cotton bandana | <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of important docs (birth certificates, passports, insurance policies) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle(s) and food | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Communication Plan with phone numbers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Map marked with two or more evacuation routes (if possible) to a valley floor | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet food, water, leashes, pet supplies & medications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prescription medications | <input type="checkbox"/> Spare chargers for cell phones & electronics. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change of clothing | <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitation supplies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spare glasses & contacts | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra set of car keys, credit cards, cash | Items to take only if time allows: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Easily carried valuables |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight and headlamp with spare batteries | <input type="checkbox"/> Family photos and other irreplaceable items |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Battery-powered AM/FM radio and spare batteries | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal computer and digital backups on hard drives and/or disks |

www.AlertMarin.org

Sign up to receive emergency alerts!



Alert Marin is Marin's primary emergency notification system. Register your address and cell phones, VoIP phones, and landlines to receive emergency alerts.

Register each family member and all work and school addresses. Configure "emergency bypass" on cell phones to receive alerts at night or if phone is silenced.



Working to Reduce Wildfire Risk Since 1992

FIRESafe MARIN is a non-profit organization dedicated to reducing the risk and hazard of wildfires and improving fire-safety awareness in Marin County, CA. We encourage community involvement by building strong partnerships and providing resources to mitigate fire danger.



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FIRESafe MARIN receives funding from the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) and Tax Measure C. Learn more about MWPA at www.marinwildfire.org

WILDFIRE

PARTNERSHIPS

PLANNING

PREVENTION

PREPAREDNESS

PROTECTION

"FIRESafe MARIN is Marin's most valuable resource for wildfire preparedness education. They foster community involvement in wildfire safety by building partnerships and encouraging cooperation among public and private stakeholders."

*Katie Rice
Chairperson
FIRESafe MARIN
Supervisor, 2nd District*

MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TODAY!

FIRESafe MARIN depends on community support through volunteers, donations, and grants to conduct our mission of improving awareness and reducing wildfire hazards.

FIRESafe MARIN is a 501(c)3 non-profit. Your donation may be tax-deductible.

www.firesafemarin.org/donate

Tax ID #68-0375763

HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS IN MARIN COUNTY



photo courtesy of Todd Barbee



FIRE SAFE MARIN

Adapting to Wildfire

The number of homes destroyed by wildfire has soared in the US in the last decade. Since 2015 in California nearly 50,000 structures were destroyed and 200 lives were lost. Marin is at risk.

To reverse this trend, homeowners must understand how homes ignite during wildfires and take action to protect their own property. There are easy and often inexpensive ways to make homes safer, many of which are required by law.

By following the simple strategies outlined in this guide, Marin residents can reduce their wildfire risk and minimize the danger to their homes, families, and communities.

Review our detailed online resources and tools for more comprehensive information about wildfire preparedness at:

www.firesafemarin.org

Zone Zero: 0'-5'

0

Zone 0 extends 5 feet from structures. There should be "zero" combustibles in "Zone Zero."

Remove *all* combustible materials, mulches, and plants to protect your home from wind-blown embers.

"Hardening" your home is critical

Embers are the most significant cause of home ignitions during wildfires. Protecting your home from embers is critically important, and can be as simple as retrofitting vents, covering openings, sealing doors and windows, and caulking gaps and cracks.

Install "Class A" roofing and keep your roof and gutters clean at all times, focusing on areas like dormers where vertical surfaces meet the roof.

Other measures, such as retrofitting ember and flame resistant vents, installing tempered, dual-pane windows, and installing fire resistant siding can make a home significantly more fire resistant.

Attachments & Fences

Wood fences, gates, and other combustible structures should not be attached directly to the house. Use fire resistant materials instead, such as steel, aluminum, or masonry. Protect fences by removing vegetation and other fuels within 5 feet.



Learn more: www.firesafemarin.org/home-hardening

Zone 1: 5'-30'

1

Zone 1 extends from 5 to 30 feet from buildings, decks, and other structures.

Keep this area "Lean, Clean, and Green," and be sure to maintain regularly throughout fire season!

Zone 2: 30'-100'

2

Zone 2 is the space extending 30 to 100 feet from buildings, decks, and other structures.

Reduce fuel for fire, and separate trees and shrubs in this area. Remove dead vegetation regularly.

Access Zone: 0'-10'

3

Property owners are responsible for vegetation adjacent to roads and driveways.

Roadway clearance is critical for evacuation and first responder access. Maintenance is required year-round.

These zones make up the 100' of Defensible Space required by law



1. Clear vegetation at least 15' overhead and 10' from sides of roads & driveways
2. Maintain at least 12' of unobstructed pavement for passage of vehicles.
3. Choose only fire resistant plants and ensure that they do not extend into the roadway.
4. Address numbers must be clearly visible from the road. Use 4" reflective or lighted numbers on a contrasting background.
5. Create vertical spacing between shrubs and lower tree limbs.

Public Right of Way: Your Responsibility



Property owners are responsible for vegetation adjacent to roads and driveways, even in the public "right of way." Ensure that vegetation is maintained near roads on all sides of your property, especially if your lot extends between two streets.

1. Use only inorganic, non-combustible mulches such as stone or gravel.
2. Choose metal outdoor furniture instead of wood or wicker.
3. Remove or relocate all combustible materials including firewood, garbage and recycling containers, lumber, and trash.
4. Replace jute or natural fiber doormats with heavy rubber or metal grates.
5. No vegetation is recommended in Zone 0.
6. Remove tree limbs that extend into this zone.
7. Clean fallen leaves and needles regularly, focusing on the roof, gutters, decks, & the base of walls.
8. Don't store combustibles on or under decks. Keep decks clean at all times.
9. Install hardscaping and paths of stone, gravel, or concrete around the perimeter of structures.



1. Remove all dead grasses, weeds, plants, & foliage.
2. Remove all fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches.
3. Remove "Gorilla Hair" or shredded bark mulch.
4. Use compost or heavy bark mulch in this zone to maintain soil moisture and control erosion.
5. Choose only fire resistant plants, and keep them healthy and well irrigated.
6. Remove fire-prone plants.
7. Provide spacing between shrubs, at least 2 times the height of the mature plant. Add space on slopes.
8. Trim trees to remove limbs 6' to 10' from the ground.
9. Remove branches that overhang your roof or within 10' of chimneys.
10. Move firewood & lumber out of Zone 1, or cover in a fire resistant enclosure.
11. Remove combustibles around and under decks and awnings.
12. Clear vegetation around fences, sheds, outdoor furniture, play structures.
13. Outbuildings and LPG storage tanks should have at least 10' of clearance.
14. Maintain regularly, focusing on the areas closest to the structure.

1. Cut annual grasses and weeds to a maximum height of 4".
2. Provide horizontal spacing between shrubs & trees.
3. Create vertical spacing between grass, shrubs and lower tree limbs.
4. Allow no more than 3" of loose surface litter (consisting of fallen leaves, needles, twigs, cones, and small branches) if needed to protect from erosion.
5. Remove all piles of dead vegetation.

Work with your neighbors

Most homes don't have 100' of space between structures and parcel lines. Property owners are required to maintain defensible space only to their property line. You may, however, be required to maintain vegetation on your property that threatens neighbor's homes, even if it's more than 100' from your structures. Check with your local fire department for details.

Work with neighbors to help provide defensible space for their homes, and ask for help if their property threatens yours. In most cases, the most effective solution to mitigate hazards is a cooperative approach between neighbors.

Plant and Tree Spacing

Mature trees don't usually need to be removed. In all zones, clear shrubs and grasses beneath trees. Remove limbs at least 6' to 10' above the ground (or 1/3 the height of tree) to eliminate a "fire ladder."



Beyond 100' & Open Spaces 4

Work with neighbors & land managers to reduce fuel on nearby properties and create fuel breaks to protect your community. Contact FIRESafe MARIN and your local fire department for help organizing neighbors to create a Firewise USA® site.



www.firesafemarin.org/firewise