

Make Your Landscape Firewise And Waterwise

(NAPSA)—Among the many steps that homeowners living in fire-prone areas can take to protect their homes from wildfires, developing a Firewise landscape is at the top of the list. Not only will a Firewise landscape have an effect on the home's beauty and value—it can also be the deciding factor in whether or not a home survives a wildfire.

Homeowners who take appropriate steps to limit the level of flammable vegetation and materials surrounding the home and incorporate fuel breaks can increase their safety from wildfire while creating a welcoming, healthy and beautiful home environment.

“Homeowners will use pathways and appreciate the beauty of their gardens, particularly once the landscaping is lean and green,” said Randall Ismay of Water & Landscape Consultants in Laguna Niguel, California. “In fact, by removing flammable grass and other plants, homeowners will save time and money on maintaining their landscapes. This will give homeowners more time to embrace the reason that they moved into the wildland/urban interface to begin with—to be part of the natural beauty that surrounds them.”

A critical aspect of keeping the landscape Firewise is proper maintenance of the moisture levels in all plants and grass. However, a leading cause of wildfires is dry weather conditions—often making water scarce. What's a homeowner to do?

The following tips can help reduce your home's vulnerability to wildfire while using water responsibly:



- Make sure that all plants and grass within 30 feet of the home are watered on a regular basis. Vegetation that becomes dry because of a drought is more likely to catch fire.

- During fire season, water plants and trees regularly to ensure that they are healthy and green. Mulch should also be kept watered, as it can become flammable when dry.

- Try not to waste water on species that do not need a lot of water. Certain species are not used to large amounts of water, and will die out and become fuel for wildfires if they are overwatered.

- Sprinkler systems are useful in ensuring that plants and grass are watered on a consistent basis—but try to use a drip trickle or microspray sprinkler system. These kinds of systems help and prevent overwatering and wasted water.

Contact your state forestry office or water and landscape specialist for more information about Firewise landscaping and to determine your area's wildfire hazard level. Resources are also available free at www.firewise.org.