

Fire Resistive Landscaping in Truckee

Many common plants naturally resist fire and can even slow its spread. In general, irrigated and well-maintained leafy plants burn slowly. Avoid plants that accumulate dead branches and twigs or plants that produce oils, resins, waxes or terpenes. Replace bare spaces and weed patches near your home with ground covers, turf, perennial flower beds, vegetable gardens, fire resistant clump grasses, and mulches. Lawns and mowed meadows are examples of excellent defensible “Clean, Green and Lean” landscaping.

Mulch helps control erosion, conserve moisture, improve air quality and reduce weed growth. It can be organic compost, bark chips, shredded leaves, or lawn clippings; or it can be mineral gravel, rock, or decomposed granite. Avoid using a thick layer of pine needles unless thoroughly composted.

Villager Nursery has compiled this list of fire resistive plants that should be considered when landscaping. We have gleaned only the hardiest species and appropriate comments (for Truckee) from lists by fire departments, departments of forestry and from fire management and prevention agencies all around the northern hemisphere.

By replacing highly flammable vegetation with recommended species, you can improve the survivability of your home when a wildfire threatens. To preserve their fire resistance, plants must be irrigated and pruned to remove dead branches. Routine care will provide an attractive defensible space. Contact Villager Nursery for selections appropriate to your microclimate and please contact Truckee Fire Department and visit the websites listed below for much more information about firewise communities.

Defensible space is not “clear-cutting” nor the removal of ALL vegetation. Creating defensible space involves removal of obvious hazards and **managing vegetation**. This may be as simple as moving a woodpile, cutting back a stand of brush or planting fire-resistant plants. Defensible space can slow the progress of fire and provide firefighters a safe position from which to defend structures. This is each and every resident and homeowner's responsibility to our neighbors and our community.

COMMON NAME SCIENTIFIC NAME

Herbaceous Perennials and Groundcovers

These hardy perennials are adapted to our climate. Green, leafy, and succulent plants are harder to burn. There are hundreds more not included here. Irrigation and regular weeding improves fire resistance in all gardens.

yarrow	<i>Achillea spp.</i>
creeping yarrow	<i>Achillea tomentosa</i>
monkshood	<i>Aconitum spp.</i>
bishop's weed	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>
bugleweed	<i>Ajuga reptans</i>
allium / onion	<i>Allium spp.</i>
nodding onion	<i>Allium cernuum</i>
pearly everlasting	<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>
pussytoes	<i>Antennaria spp.</i>
columbine	<i>Aquilegia spp.</i>
sea thrift	<i>Armeria maritima</i>
western mugwort	<i>Artemisia ludoviciana</i>
rockcress	<i>Aubrieta deltoidea</i>
mahonia	<i>Mahonia spp.</i>
bergenia / pigsqueak	<i>Bergenia cordifolia</i>
bluebells	<i>Campanula spp.</i>
Jupiter's beard	<i>Centranthus ruber</i>
snow in summer	<i>Cerastium tomentosum</i>
fireweed	<i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i>
lily-of-the-valley	<i>Convallaria majalis</i>
tickseed	<i>Coreopsis spp.</i>
hardy ice plant	<i>Delosperma spp.</i>
delphinium / larkspur	<i>Delphinium spp.</i>
sweet William	<i>Dianthus barbatus</i>
dianthus / pink	<i>Dianthus spp.</i>
bleeding heart	<i>Dicentra spp.</i>
coneflower	<i>Echinacea spp.</i>
fleabane	<i>Erigeron spp.</i>
California poppy	<i>Eschscholzia californica</i>
fescue	<i>Festuca spp.</i>
strawberry	<i>Fragaria spp.</i>
blanket flower	<i>Gaillardia spp.</i>
sweet woodruff	<i>Galium spp.</i>
hardy geranium	<i>Geranium spp.</i>
ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>
sunrose	<i>Helianthemum nummularium</i>
daylily	<i>Hemerocallis spp.</i>
coral bells	<i>Heuchera spp.</i>
hosta / funkia	<i>Hosta spp.</i>

candytuft	<i>Iberis sempervirens</i>
iris	<i>Iris spp.</i>
red hot poker	<i>Kniphofia uvaria</i>
lamium / dead-nettle	<i>Lamium spp.</i>
English lavender	<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>
lavandin	<i>Lavandula x intermedia</i>
Shasta daisy	<i>Leucanthemum x superbum</i>
statice	<i>Limonium perezii</i>
flax	<i>Linum spp.</i>
honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera spp.</i>
moneywort	<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>
mahonia	<i>Mahonia spp.</i>
Monkeyflower	<i>Mimulus spp.</i>
evening primrose	<i>Oenothera spp.</i>
poppy	<i>Papaver spp.</i>
penstemon	<i>Penstemon spp.</i>
Rocky Mt. penstemon	<i>Penstemon strictus</i>
creeping phlox	<i>Phlox subulata</i>
Jacob's ladder	<i>Polemonium spp.</i>
spring cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla (herbaceous spp.)</i>
spotted lungwort	<i>Pulmonaria longifolia</i>
coneflower	<i>Rudbeckia spp.</i>
sage / salvia	<i>Salvia spp.</i>
lavender cotton	<i>Santolina virens</i>
rock soapwort	<i>Saponaria ocymoides</i>
stonecrop / sedum	<i>Sedum spp.</i>
hens and chicks	<i>Sempervivum tectorum</i>
goldenrod	<i>Solidago spp.</i>
lamb's ear	<i>Stachys byzantina</i>
meadow-rue	<i>Thalictrum spp.</i>
creeping thyme	<i>Thymus praecox</i>
clover	<i>Trifolium spp.</i>
dwarf periwinkle	<i>Vinca minor</i>
violet / viola	<i>Viola spp.</i>
yucca	<i>Yucca spp.</i>

Vines

Deciduous vines are an attractive addition to landscapes offering flowers, fall colors and visual interest.

clematis	<i>Clematis spp.</i>
hop vine	<i>Humulus lupulus</i>
honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera spp.</i>
Virginia creeper	<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>

Shrubs

Deciduous shrubs can be used in foundation plantings if maintained, watered, and well spaced. Avoid evergreen dwarf conifers and junipers near structures. Place them at least twenty feet from any structure and prune regularly. If maintained, hedge rows can deflect wind and filter wind-blown embers. Plant dense deciduous hedges at least thirty feet from structures only if they'll receive regular irrigation and maintenance..

vine maple	<i>Acer circinatum</i>
Amur maple	<i>Acer ginnala</i>
mountain maple	<i>Acer glabrum</i>
Tatarian maple	<i>Acer tataricum</i>
mountain alder	<i>Alnus incana</i> var. <i>tenuifolia</i>
serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier</i> spp.
bearberry manzanita	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i> cv.
bog birch	<i>Betula glandulosa</i>
mountain mahogany	<i>Cercocarpus ledifolius</i>
red-twig dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i>
bearberry cotoneaster	<i>Cotoneaster dammeri</i> 'Eichholz'
Douglas hawthorne	<i>Crataegus douglasii</i>
shrubby cinquefoil	<i>Dasiphora fruticosa</i>
rabbitbrush	<i>Ericameria nauseosa</i>
Russian olive	<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>
dwarf burning bush	<i>Euonymus alatus</i> 'compactus'
mountain spray	<i>Holodiscus</i> spp.
Twinberry	<i>Lonicera involucrata</i>
Oregon grape	<i>Mahonia</i> spp.
mountain lover	<i>Paxistima canbyi</i>
Russian sage	<i>Perovskia atriplicifolia</i> (S. <i>yangii</i>)
mock orange	<i>Philadelphus lewisii</i>
ninebark	<i>Physocarpus capitatus</i>
sandcherry	<i>Prunus besseyi</i>
chokecherry	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>
Gambel oak	<i>Quercus gambelii</i>
no. lights azalea	<i>Rhodo.</i> 'Northern Lights'
sumac	<i>Rhus</i> spp.
fragrant sumac	<i>Rhus aromatica</i>
Sierra currant	<i>Ribes nevadense</i>
currant	<i>Ribes</i> spp.
hardy shrub rose	<i>Rosa</i> spp.
Wood's rose	<i>Rosa woodsii</i> var. <i>ultramontana</i>
thimbleberry	<i>Rubus parviflorus</i>
raspberry	<i>Rubus</i> spp.
dwarf arctic willow	<i>Salix purpurea</i> 'nana'
Scouler's willow	<i>Salix scouleriana</i>
willow	<i>Salix</i> spp.
elderberry	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
red elderberry	<i>Sambucus racemosa</i>
Sargent crabapple	<i>Malus sargentii</i>
buffaloberry	<i>Shepherdia</i> spp.
birchleaf spiraea	<i>Spiraea betulifolia</i>
western spiraea	<i>Spiraea douglasii</i>
goldflame spiraea	<i>Spiraea x bumalda</i> 'Goldflame'
snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos</i> spp.
lilac	<i>Syringa</i> spp.
common lilac	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>
American cranberry	<i>Viburnum trilobum</i>

A deciduous screen can slow or even stop a fire before it reaches structures. Aspen, birch, maple, poplar and willow require some irrigation to remain fire resistant. -Forest managers frequently use the terms "asbestos type" and "firebreak" to describe quaking aspen- usfs - <https://rb.gy/ednjxv>

Trees

Deciduous trees can be clumped, scattered, or planted in greenbelts or windbreak patterns. Evergreen trees are generally flammable and should be well spaced if planted at all. Placement of trees is often more important than the species. Space conifer trees at least thirty feet apart and prune mature specimens to a height of at least eight feet. Crowns should not touch and branches should not overhang structures. Remove combustible material from under and between trees. Mulch generally remains moist and helps trees remain well hydrated.

maple	<i>Acer</i> spp.
bigtooth maple	<i>Acer grandidentatum</i>
hedge maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>
red maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i>
Ohio buckeye	<i>Aesculus glabra</i>
western water birch	<i>Betula occidentalis</i>
paper birch	<i>Betula papyrifera</i>
hawthorne	<i>Crataegus</i> spp.
golden chain	<i>Laburnum x watereri</i>
western larch	<i>Larix occidentalis</i>
apple	<i>Malus</i> spp.
poplar	<i>Populus</i> spp.
narrowleaf poplar	<i>Populus angustifolia</i>
quaking aspen	<i>Populus tremuloides</i>
cottonwood	<i>Populus trichocarpa</i>
cherry	<i>Prunus</i> spp.
chokecherry	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>
northern red oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i>
mountain ash	<i>Sorbus</i> spp.

For additional information:

Truckee Fire: <https://www.truckeefire.org/dspace>

CalFire: <https://www.fire.ca.gov/dspace>

FireWise:

<https://www.nfpa.org/Education-and-Research/Wildfire/Preparing-homes-for-wildfire>

Nevada Division of Forestry:

<https://www.livingwithfire.com/get-prepared/how-to-improve-my-defensible-space/>

USDA Forest Service: www.fs.fed.us

UNCE:

Choosing the Right Plants for Lake Tahoe Basin:

<https://naes.agnt.unr.edu/PMS/Pubs/2017-3448.pdf>

OSU extension:

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/sites/default/files/2023-06/em9005-chapter1.pdf>

Cheatgrass:

<https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/natural-resources/cheatgrass-and-wildfire-6-310/>

Fire Adapted Communities:

<https://fireadapted.org/resource-type/landscape-treatments/>

Bureau of Land Management: www.nv.blm.gov

Sierra Front Wildfire Coop: <http://www.sierra-front.net>

WSU comprehensive list:

<https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2086/2018/02/fireresistantbrochure2017.pdf>

Anchorage Wildfire Partnership:

https://www.muni.org/Departments/Fire/Wildfire/Documents/Firewise_Alaska_Vegetation_Guide.pdf

Search for Fire and Forestry in Nevada, Utah, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan for additional information.