



STRIKING A BALANCE
BETWEEN BEAUTY,
HABITAT, AND
SAFETY

FIREWISE GARDEN DESIGN





Overview of Defensible Space Zones



Design Ideas



Selecting Plants



Mulch

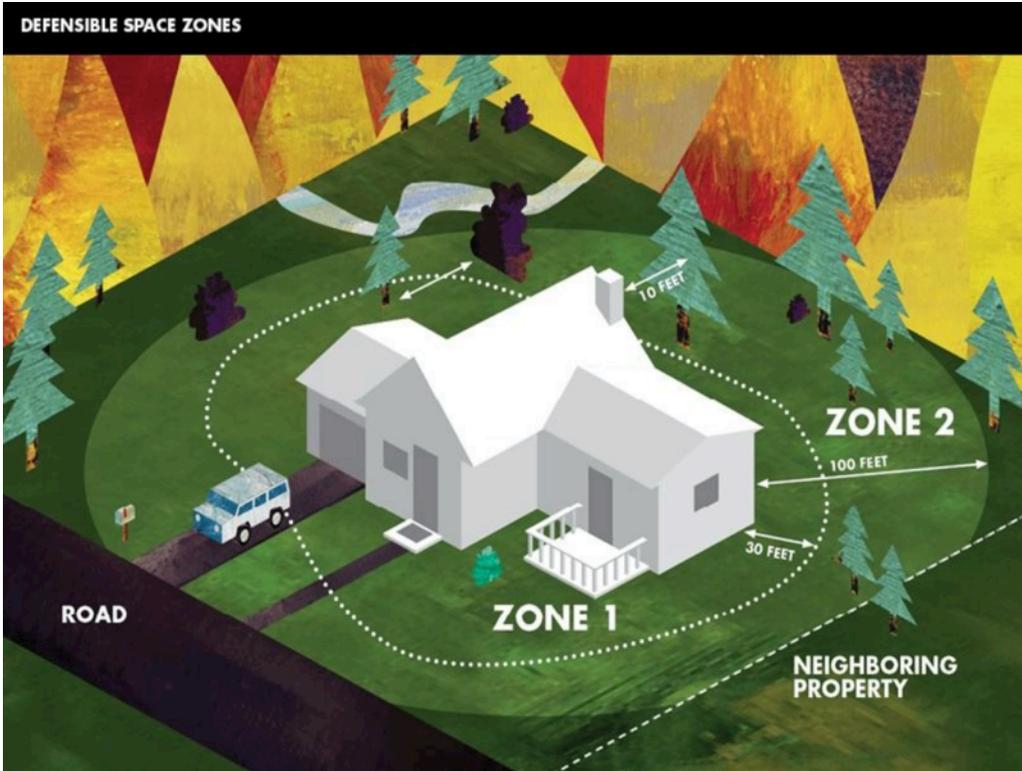


Maintenance, Maintenance, Maintenance



Summary

CONTENTS



DEFENSIBLE SPACE GUIDELINES

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



DEFENSIBLE SPACE GUIDELINES

MARIN FSC

ZONE 0 STRUCTURE TO 5'

- “Immediate Zone”
- Remove anything combustible
 - Patio furniture
 - Fiber door mats
 - Trash and Recycling containers
 - Tree limbs
 - Plants?
- DO include
 - Hardscape
 - Inorganic, non-combustible mulch



ZONE 1 STRUCTURE TO 30'

- “Lean, Clean and Green Zone”
- Remove fire prone plants
- Space plants to decrease plant fuel density
- Create breaks in planting with noncombustible features
- Use compost or heavy bark mulch



ZONE 2 30' TO 100'

- “Extended Zone”
- Cut or mow annual grasses 4”
- Vertical and horizontal spacing of trees and shrubs
- Remove dead vegetation
- Remove fallen leaves and needles over 3” depth

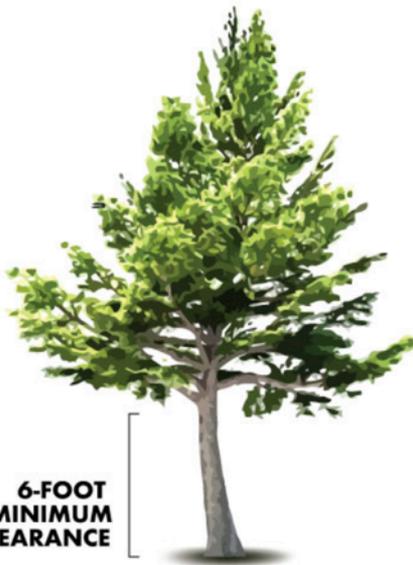


ZONE 3 ACCESS ZONE

- Extends 0' to 10' (min) horizontally from edge of road/driveway
- 14' vertical
- Fire resistant plantings
- Vertical spacing between shrubs and tree limbs
- Cut all annual grasses



**6-FOOT
MINIMUM
CLEARANCE**



**3X HEIGHT
OF SHRUB
MINIMUM
VERTICAL
CLEARANCE**

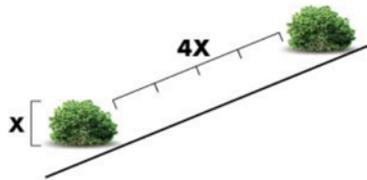


VERTICAL PLANT SPACING

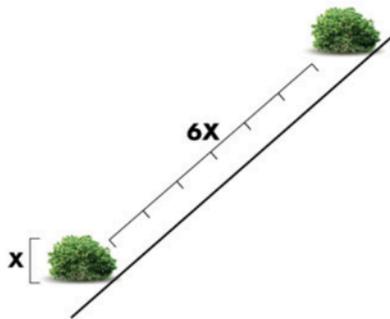
SHRUBS



FLAT TO MILD SLOPE (LESS THAN 20%)



MILD TO MODERATE SLOPE (20%–40%)



MODERATE TO STEEP SLOPE (GREATER THAN 40%)

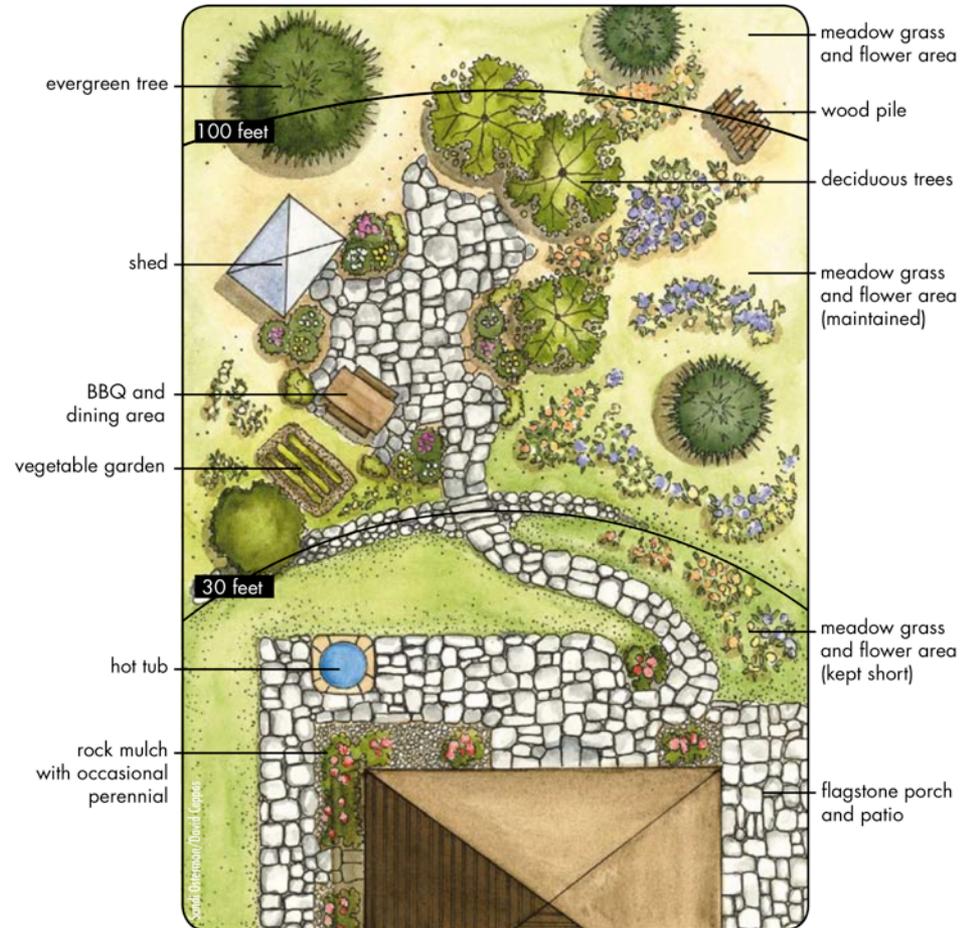
TREES



HORIZONTAL PLANT SPACING

DESIGN IDEAS

- Harden your home first!
- Hardscape patio
- Paths connect to focal areas
- Fire resistant plants
- Drip irrigation / Hydrozones
- Gravel mulch near home

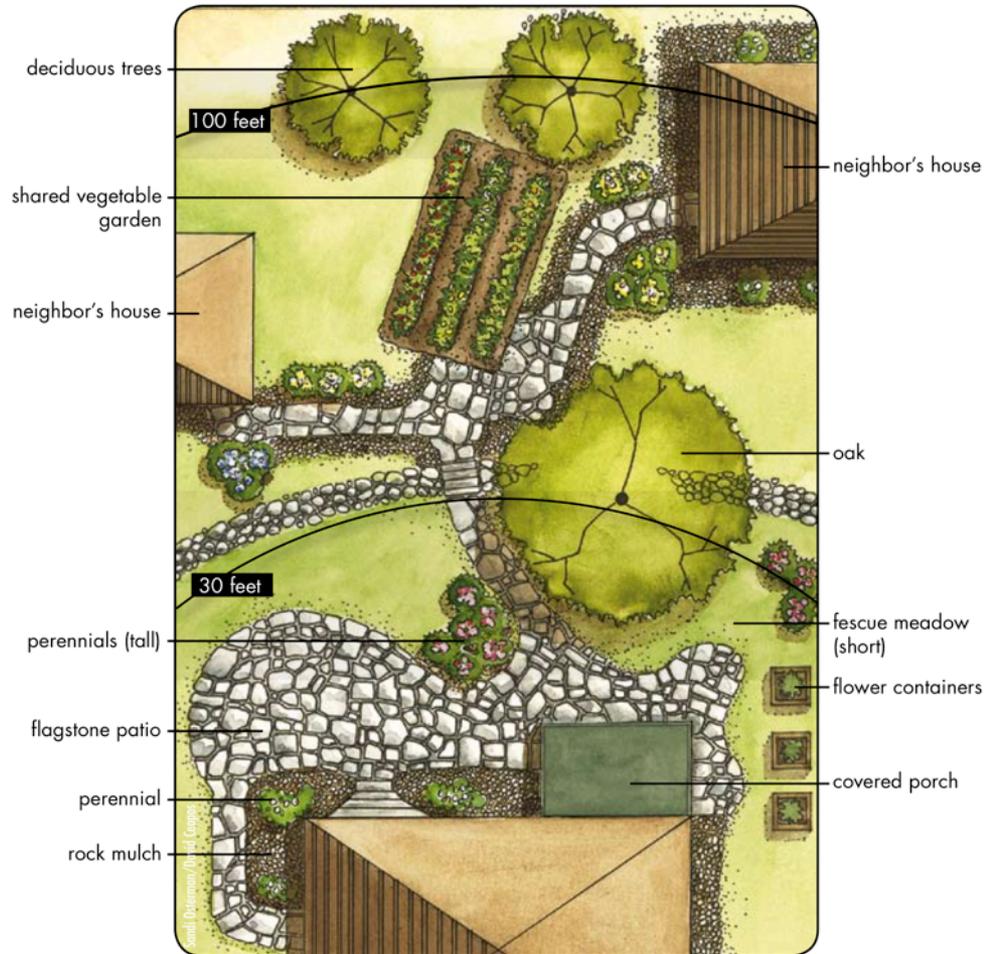


DESIGN IDEAS

MINIMIZE FIRE MOVEMENT

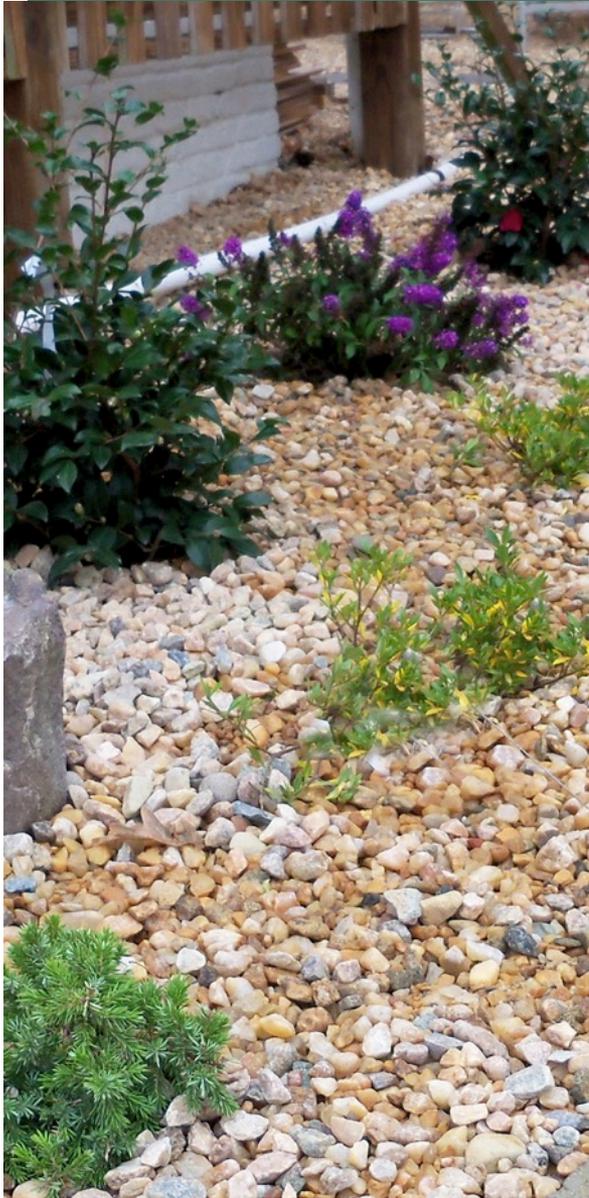
AVOID:

- Planting adjacent to siding
- Under vents or eaves
- Tree limbs over roof
- Planting under or near the deck





DESIGN IDEAS FOR ZONE 0

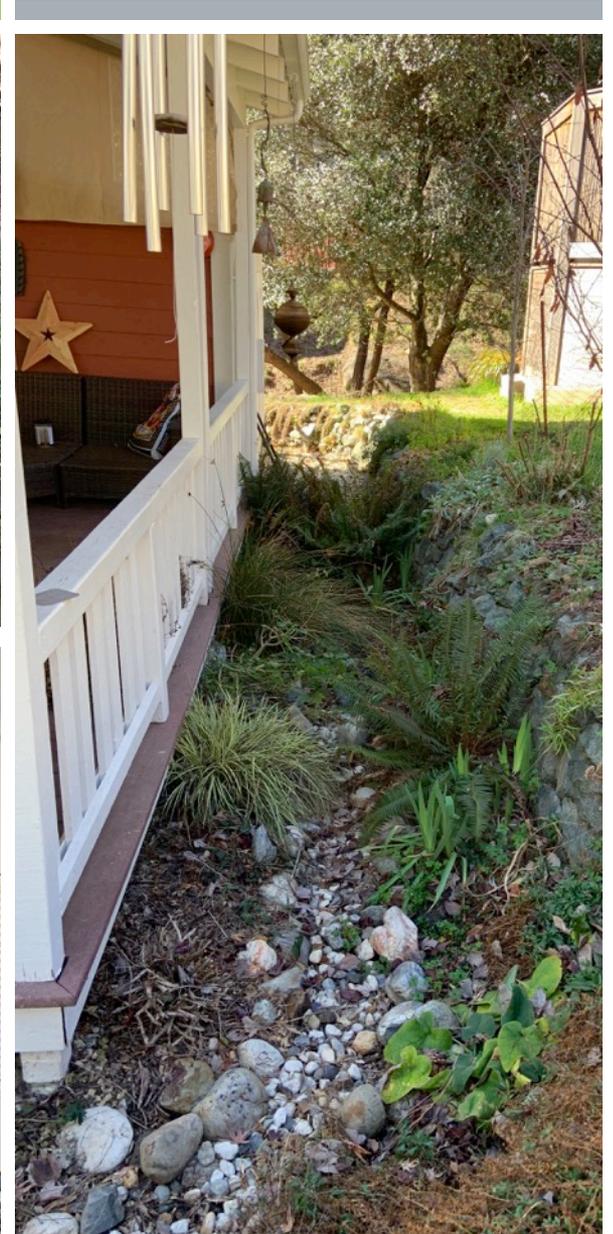
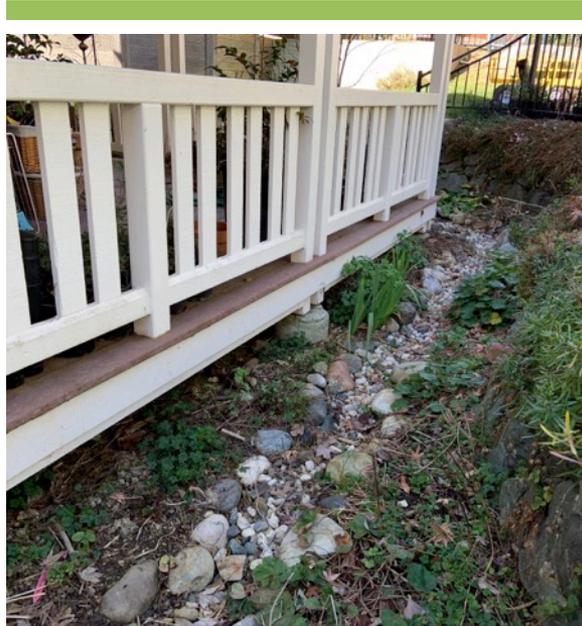


DESIGN IDEAS FOR ZONE 0

DESIGN IDEAS FOR ZONE 0

MAKING MODIFICATIONS

- Prune and thin existing plants
- Relocate plants!
- Add gravel mulch



PLANT SELECTION



FIRE RESISTANT PLANTS

- Leaves, not needles
- Leaves are supple, moist and easily crushed
- Trees are not bushy or twiggy
- Shrubs are low growing (<2')
- Have Non-resinous sap
- Low surface area to volume ratio
- Deciduous trees



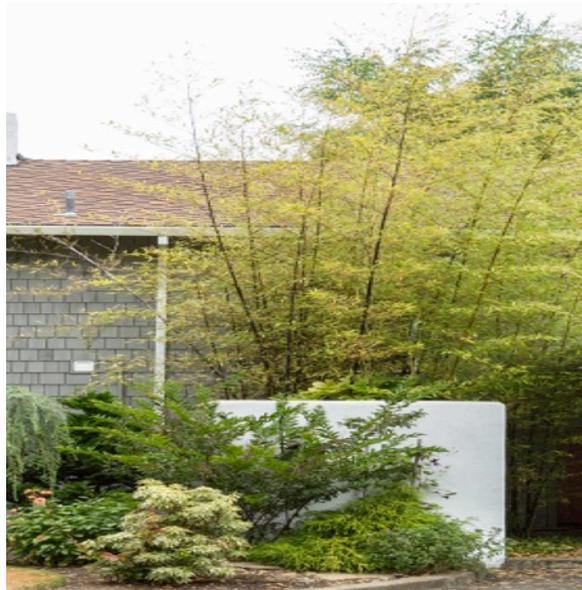
FIRE PRONE PLANTS

- Often blade-leaf or needle leaf evergreens
- Often stiff, woody, small or fine lacey leaves
- Leave and wood contain volatile waxes, fats, terpenes or oils (strong scent).
- Sap is gummy, resinous or has a strong odor
- Plentiful fine, twiggy, dry or dead material
- May have pubescent leaves
- May have loose papery bark
- Typically flame with ignition, not smolder

FIRE-PRONE PLANTS

SOME PLANTS ARE
MADE TO BURN

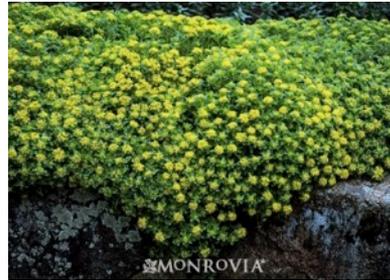
- Juniper
- Bamboo
- Arborvitae, Yew
- Italian Cypress
- Rosemary
- Scotch Broom
- Pines
- Scrub Oaks



FIRE-RESISTANT PLANTS

SPECIAL PLANTS FOR ZONE 0

- Heuchera spp. – Coral Bells
- Achillea spp. – Yarrow
- Aquilegia spp. – Western Columbine
- Dicentra spp. – Western Bleeding Heart
- Fragaria spp. – Strawberry
- Iris spp. – Douglas Iris
- Penstemon spp. – Beard Tongue
- Sisyrinchium bellum – Blue-eyed Grass
- Sedum, Dudley, and Echeveria spp.



MULCH

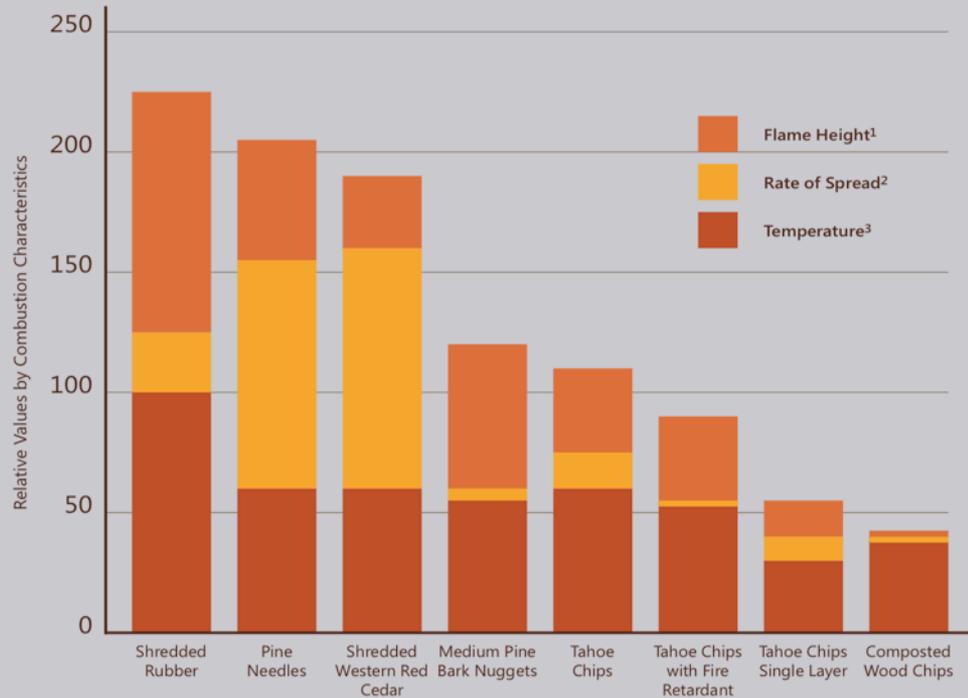


INORGANIC MULCHES

- Pea gravel
- “Crushed Clean”
- Decomposed Granite

ORGANIC MULCHES

- Coarse wood chip
- Decomposing wood chip



ANNUAL MAINTENANCE

MAINTAIN PLANT HEALTH

IRRIGATE YOUR PLANTS

MOW GRASSES

PRUNE TO REMOVE DEAD TWIGS, SPENT FLOWERS

PRUNE TREES AT 15 FEET FROM HOUSE

CLEAN-UP LEAVES AND NEEDLES IN ZONES 0 – 1
– 2

CLEAN-UP BENEATH YOUR DECK



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Firesafe Marin (www.firesafemarin.org)

CalFire (www.readyforwildfire.org)

Urban Forest Ecosystems Institute (selectree.calpoly.edu)

Fire Wise Demonstration Gardens

UC ANR (Home Landscaping for Fire - publication 8228)

UCCE Master Gardener Program

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