



# Firewise Landscaping Checklist

**When designing and installing a firewise landscape, consider the following:**

- Local area fire history.
- Site location and overall terrain.
- Prevailing winds and seasonal weather.
- Property contours and boundaries.
- Native vegetation.
- Plant characteristics and placement (duffage, water and salt retention ability, aromatic oils, fuel load per area, and size).
- Irrigation requirements.

**To create a firewise landscape, remember that the primary goal is fuel reduction. To this end, initiate the zone concept. Zone 1 is closest to the structure; Zones 2-4 move progressively further away.**

- Zone 1. This well-irrigated area encircles the structure for at least 30' on all sides, providing space for fire suppression equipment in the event of an emergency. Plantings should be limited to carefully spaced fire resistant species.
- Zone 2. Fire resistant plant materials should be used here. Plants should be low-growing, and the irrigation system should extend into this section.
- Zone 3. Place low-growing plants and well-spaced trees in this area, remembering to keep the volume of vegetation (fuel) low.
- Zone 4. This furthest zone from the structure is a natural area. Thin selectively here, and remove highly flammable vegetation.

**Also remember to:**

- Be sure to leave a minimum of 30' around the house to accommodate fire equipment, if necessary.
- Carefully space the trees you plant.
- Take out the "ladder fuels" — vegetation that serves as a link between grass and tree tops. It can carry fire to a structure or from a structure to vegetation.
- Give yourself added protection with "fuel breaks" like driveways, gravel walkways, and lawns.

**When maintaining a landscape:**

- Keep trees and shrubs pruned. Prune all trees up to 6' to 10' from the ground.
- Remove leaf clutter and dead and overhanging branches.
- Mow your lawn regularly.
- Dispose of cuttings and debris promptly, according to local regulations.
- Store firewood away from the house.
- Be sure the irrigation system is well maintained.
- Use care when refueling garden equipment and maintain it regularly.
- Store and use flammable liquids properly.
- Dispose of smoking materials carefully.
- Become familiar with local regulations regarding vegetative clearances, disposal of debris, and fire safety requirements for equipment.
- Follow manufacturers' instructions when using fertilizers and pesticides.

**This information brought to you courtesy of  
FireWise and Illinois Fire Extinguisher Co, Inc.  
Visit us on the web at <http://www.illinoisfire.com>**



# Firewise Landscaping