

## **City of Poulsbo Firewise Planting Guidelines**

Although there is abundant information available on the subject, there are several important guidelines to keep in mind and help keep your property safe:

- While there is no such thing as 100% fire resistant planting, fire consciousness is not an excuse for zero landscaping. Trees and plants are critical in climate mitigation.
- Create a defensible space around the area or structure you want to protect. Not only can inappropriate plantings cause damage to infrastructure, they can be fire hazards as well. A 10' no planting zone and 30' firewise zone is commonly recommended.
- Make use of fire-resistant mulches (such as decorative rock or a combination with wood bark) and hardscapes within the defensible space.
- Certain plants are more or less flammable and should be planted accordingly. Define your defensible space and plant accordingly.
- Firewise plantings still need to be watered and maintained. Watering during the establishment period (typically 3 years) and pruning to remove dead wood is vital to maintaining low fuel sources around structures.
- Make use of low growing ground covers. These make effective fire-wise plantings, especially near houses, along pathways and as part of rock gardens.
- Do not allow yard debris to accumulate or collect in large piles.
- Create a neighborhood awareness program to lessen the chance of fire spreading.

### **Trees/Plants to Avoid**

Avoid planting resinous trees and pyrophytic shrubs and plants within 30' from the house or structure. Highly flammable plants typically have a lot of dead, dry inner material, aromatic leaves, waxy/oily leaves twigs or stems, sap with a strong odor and/or papery/loose bark. These includes:

- Arborvitae, *Thuja* species such as western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*) and American arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*);
- Spruce, *Picea* species such as Sitka (*Picea sitchensis*), Colorado blue (*Picea pungens*) and Serbian spruce (*Picea omorika*);
- Fir, *Abies* species such as Korean (*Abies koreana*), Alpine (*Abies lasiocarpa*) and Noble (*Abies procera*) firs.
- Pine, *Pinus* species such as Shore (*Pinus contorta*), Western White (*Pinus monticola*), Scots (*Pinus sylvestris*) and Mugho (*Pinus mugo*) pines;
- Leyland Cypress, *Cupressus x leylandii*
- Juniper, all *Juniperus* species;
- Grasses that dry out during the summer.
- Holly, *Ilex spp.*, additionally, English holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) are incredibly invasive.

If you have any of these trees or plants near your house or structure and do not want to remove them, keep them pruned and thinned and remove dead material regularly. Do not allow needles or twigs to accumulate on roofs or in gutters.

### **Fire Resistant Trees for our Region**

- Maples, *Acer* species such as Amur maple, big leaf maple, vine maple and Rocky Mountain maple;
- Serviceberry, *Amelanchier alnifolia*;
- Flowering Dogwood, *Cornus kousa* varieties;
- Hawthorn, *Crataegus laevigata*, not to be confused with the invasive English Hawthorn, *Crataegus monogya*;
- European Beech, *Fagus sylvatica*;
- Cascara, *Frangula purshiana* ;
- Crabapple, both our native *Malus fusca* and the *Malus* hybrids that are disease resistant such as Sargent Tina and Golden Raindrops;
- Oaks, our native Oregon White Oak, *Quercus garryana* or other species such as red oaks, *Quercus rubra* or swamp white oak, *Quercus bicolor*;
- Japanese Tree Lilac, *Syringa reticulata*.

### **Fire Resistant Shrubs for our Region**

- Barberry, *Berberis spp.*
- Blue Mist Spirea, *Caryopteris x clandonensis*
- Red-Osier Dogwood, *Cornus sericea*
- Cinquefoil, *Dasiphora fruticose*
- Oceanspray, *Holodiscus discolor*
- Mock Orange, *Philadelphus spp*
- Ninebark, *Physocarpus capitatus* or *opulifolius*
- Flowering Current, *Ribes spp.*
- Wood's Rose, *Rosa woodsia*
- Willow, *Salix spp.*
- Russian Sage, *Salvia yangii*
- Elderberry, *Sambucus spp.*
- Spirea, *Spirea spp.*

### **Fire Resistant Perennials and Groundcovers for our Region**

- Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*
- Maidenhair Fern, *Adiantum pedatum*
- Kinnikinnick, *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*
- Coreopsis, *Coreopsis spp.*
- Wood Fern, *Dryopteris expansa*
- Lillies, *Fritilaria spp.*
- Coral Bells, *Heuchera spp.*
- Hosta, *Hosta spp.*
- Iris, *Iris ssp.*
- Wood Sorrel, *Oxalis oregano*
- Sword Fern, *Polystichum munitum*
- Cinquefoil, *Potentilla spp.*
- Stone Crops, *Sedum spp.*
- Solomon's Seal, *Smilacina spp.*
- Mother of Thyme, *Thymus praecox*
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### **Local/National Resources**

Many local agencies and non-profits have put a lot of time and resources into developing comprehensive documents that should be utilized. These links also offer additional recommended resources.

- King County Forestry Program, “Fire-resistant Landscape Plants for the Puget Sound Basin”, <https://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/archive-documents/wlr/LANDS/forestry/pdfs/FireResistant.pdf> ;
- National Fire Protection Association, Firewise USA Program, <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA> ;
- Oregon State University Extension Service, PNW Extension Publication, “Fire-resistant Plants for Home Landscapes”, <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pub/pnw-590-fire-resistant-plants-home-landscapes>;
- Pacific Northwest Extension publication, Fire Resistant Plants for Home Landscapes, <https://www.firefree.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Fire-Resistant-Plants.pdf>
- SW Hills Eugene Neighborhood Association, “Fire-Wise Plant Material for the Pacific Northwest”, <https://swhillseugeneorg.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/fire-wise-plants-for-the-pacific-nw.pdf>
- Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Community Wildfire Resilience and Preparedness, <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/programs-and-services/wildfire/wildfire-preparedness>;
- Washington State University, Fire Resistant Plants for Chelan/Douglas Counties, <https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2086/2018/01/fireresistantplants2017.pdf>