

# What is FireSmart Gardening?

FireSmart is living with and managing for wildfire on our landscape. When our lifestyle and homes extend further into forested areas that are prone to wildfire, we can reduce the risk to property by landscaping with fire resistant strategies in mind:

- Select the right plant
- Plant strategically
- Use non-flammable mulch
- Maintain

## **SELECT THE RIGHT PLANT**

Fire resistant plants have:

- Moist, supple leaves (ignite and burn slower)
- Little dead wood or accumulate dead material (needles, leaves or bark)
- Open branching habits (less fuel for fire)
- Fewer total branches and leaves (less fuel for fire)
- Have a slow growing habit (less pruning required)
- Water-like sap with little or no odor (less volatile)
- Low amount of sap or resin material
- Low growing habit

While these plants can be damaged or even killed by fire, their foliage and stems do not significantly contribute to the fuel or the fire's intensity. ***See reverse of page for examples.***

## **PLANT STRATEGICALLY**

- Plant most trees and brush at least 10 metres (30 feet) away from structures
- Thin trees and brush up to 30 metres (100 feet) of structures
- A healthy, green lawn can be a fire resistant landscape and effective fuel break
- Keep plants healthy (unhealthy plants can be a greater fire risk)
- Plant plants with high water use together
- Use decorative rock, pathways and retaining walls
- Principles of xeriscaping can be applied to any landscape style

## **USE A NON-FLAMMABLE MULCH**

- Use gravel or decorative rock or a combination of wood bark mulch and decorative rock
- Avoid using bark or pine needle mulch within 1.5 metres of building walls

## **MAINTENANCE**

- prune lower tree limbs 3-5 meters from the ground
- decrease density with increased space between branches
- shorten plant height
- maintain required watering of vegetation
- remove combustible materials from yard and roof

Even in the driest regions, homeowners can conserve water and have beautiful fire safe landscapes.

# LANDSCAPING WITH FIRESMART IN MIND

FireSmart plants to consider:

## **Groundcover**

Carpet bugleweed, pink pussytoes, kinnikinnick, rock cress, mahala mat, snow-in-summer, dianthus, garden carnation or pinks, yellow iceplant, purple iceplant, wild strawberry, Japanese pachysandra, creeping phlox, sedum or stonecrops, hens and chicks, creeping thyme and speedwell.

## **Perennials**

Yarrow, chives, columbine Sea thrift, basket of gold, heartleaf bergenia, sedges, trumpet vine, tickseed, delphinium, coneflower (Echinacea), fire weed, blanket flower, grayleaf cranesbill, sun rose, daylily, corabells, hosta lily, iris, torchlily (red hot poker), lavender, blue flax, honeysuckle, lupine, evening primrose, oriental poppy, beardtongue, prairie coneflower (Mexican hat), salvia (sage), lambs ear, yucca.

## **Shrubs: Broadleaf Evergreen**

Point reyes ceanothus, orchid rockrose, Carol Mackie daphne, cranberry cotoneaster, Oregon grapeholly, creeping holly, salal, Oregon boxwood, Pacific rhododendron.

## **Shrubs: Deciduous**

Vine maple, serviceberry, rocky mountain maple, blue mist spirea, redosier dogwood, dwarf burning bush, oceanspray, mockorange, Russian sage, tall hedge, western sandcherry, fernleaf buckthorn, western azalea, sumac, flowering currant, hardy shrub rose, wood's rose, willow, bumald spirea, snowberry, western spirea, lilac, compact American cranberry.

## **Deciduous trees**

Amur maple, bigleaf maple, red maple, horse chestnut, mountain alder, red alder, birch, Western catalpa, common hackberry, eastern redbud, flowering dogwood, Hawthorn (not European Hawthorn), green ash, European beech, white ash, thornless honeylocust, Kentucky coffee tree, walnut, American sweetgum, crabapple, quaking aspen, Western or California sycamore, chokecherry, Oregon white oak, Canada red chokecherry, pin oak, purple robe locust, red oak, mountain ash.

*Reference:* FireSmart Guide to Landscaping

<http://www.firesmartcanada.ca/resourceslibrary/firesmart-guide-to-landscaping>

Print this from the VMGA website at:

<http://www.mgabc.org/resources> and select *Victoria* and *FireSmart Landscaping*