

GROWING RESILIENCE

A GUIDE TO LANDSCAPING IN FIRE-PRONE AREAS

Making simple changes to your garden can help to reduce the bush fire risk to your property. Lets continue conversations with the community around being bush fire ready. This approach incorporates the strategic placement of plants with lower flammability, a regular maintenance plan, and the use of non-combustible materials.

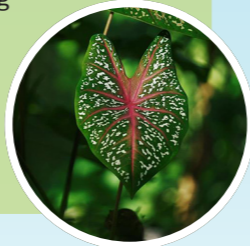
PLACEMENT

- Avoid dense plantings that can act as fuel for fires, create vertical and horizontal spacing around plants to reduce the risk of flames spreading
- Maintain a safe distance between plants and your home as well as other structures like sheds and fences
- Create separation between plants, garden beds and tree canopies
- Avoid garden beds at the base of trees which may encourage a fire to climb
- Keep plants away from structures; vines and creepers can act as ladder fuels



PREFERRED PLANTS

- Succulents
- Plants with high moisture content in their leaves
- Plants with low oil and resin content
- Plants with smooth bark
- Plants with open and loose branching
- Plants with broad or fleshy leaves
- Plants with salt in foliage (e.g. many silvery-grey leafed plants)
- Grass species that stay green during summer



NON-COMBUSTIBLE MATERIALS

- Provide barriers to wind, radiant heat and embers such as stone walls and non-combustible fences
- Use materials such as brick, earth, stone, concrete and galvanised iron that can act as heat barriers
- Consider non-flammable mulches like gravel, pebbles, or rocks



DEFENDABLE SPACES

Defendable spaces are areas which allow emergency services access and provide a relatively safe area for fire fighters and home owners to defend property

- Prioritise plants with lower flammability and keep vegetation to a minimum
- Decrease the ground fuel and maintain a well-managed landscape
- Placement of pools, water features, dams, driveways or paths help slow an approaching fire



WATER

- Keep plants irrigated and hydrated to increase resilience
- Install automatic sprinkler systems to help protect structures

WATER TANKS

- Place tanks where they will be readily accessible and easy for firefighters to find
- During a fire, water supply must have appropriate pressure and connections such as Storz fittings
- Above ground tanks should be constructed of fire-resistant material such as metal or concrete.
- Plastic water tanks should either be underground, on a concrete base or surrounded by a non-flammable border
- Pipes from the tank should be underground to prevent melting



MAINTENANCE

- Create a regular maintenance plan
- Regularly prune and remove dead plants
- Clean-up ground bark, leaf litter and dead limbs and foliage
- Cut lower limbs on larger shrubs
- Keep the lawn well hydrated
- Keep shrubs away from windows and door entries
- Ideally grass should be no more than five to ten centimetres in height

