FIRESCAPING

Jennifer de Graaf
PLA, LEED AP, BFQP & Rater, QWEL

Jennifer@deGraafAssoc.com
Jennifer@ReScapeCA.org

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NOT A STYLE

Firescaping isn’t a style!

• Informed design
• Defensible zones
• Healthy plants
• Good garden hygiene
• Proper pruning and care
• Intelligent watering
FIRST CHECK

Local ordinances & Codes

• Fire
• Planning
• Building
• They rule over any model, list, or article
Defensible: IBHS Model

- **0-5’**
- **5-30’**
- **30-100’**
- Non-combustible hardscaping
- Low combustibility plants such as non-woody, non-resinous, perennials.
- Take special care with planting near vents, windows, interior corners.
Defensible: IBHS Model

- 0-5’
- 5-30’
- 30-100’

- Flames can climb 3x the height of the fuel.
- Keep sheds or other outbuildings out of this zone
- Avoid fire ladders
- Separate groupings of plants to keep them from sharing and spreading flames.
DEFENSIBLE: IBHS MODEL

- 0-5’
- 5-30’
- 30-100’ (or PL)

- Use plant spacing to keep fire returning to ground-level
- Min. 10’ spacing between mature size tree canopies
- Site homes away from ridgelines and top of slope or increase fuel modification zone depth.
Landscape Locally

Conserv Water

Conserv Energy

Conserv Water

Frenergy

Water & Air Quality

Wildlife Habitat

Nurture The Soil

Less To The Landfill
FOCUS ON CA NATIVES

• CA Natives help preserve and enhance wildlife habitat.
• Las Pilitas totally geeky leaf burn times study: http://www.laspilitas.com/classes/fire_burn_times.html
GENERALIZATIONS

• Non-resinous
  - Deciduous < evergreens
  - Broadleaf < needles
• Moist, easily bent < stiff or leathery
• Thick leaves < fine
• Slower growing
• Fewer branches, leaves
• Less leaf litter

Bamboo
GENERALIZATIONS

Less flammable cont.:
• Open branching habit
• Watery sap < gummy thick sap
• Fragrance-free foliage
• Hairless, non-fuzzy
• Silver foliage except native sages••••••••••.

Stachys byzantina
CONSIDERING WATER

- Amount of heat needed to ignite a plant is partly related to moisture content in plant.
- A Licensed Landscape Architect can help you navigate the CA water budget ordinance (WELO)
CONSIDERING WATER

Appropriate application method - put the water where it is needed

• Use the right amount for the plants
• Install smart controllers
• MWELO
• Hire an irrigation designer or approved professional per code.
Mulch

• Conserves water in the soil – up to 70% saved from evaporating with a 3” layer!
• Evens temperatures in the soil which helps keep plants healthy.
• Leaf litter totally counts, especially under native oaks
COMPOST

- Conserves water
- Enhances water availability to plants
- Enhances nutrient availability to plants
- Enhances soil health which is critical for plant health.
LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

Shearing is:

• Stressful
• Creates a fast, weak response
• Leads to more flammable growth habits

• Use proper PRUNING instead to support good structure and health!
LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

Trees

• Hire a Consulting Arborist to evaluate a tree. ASCA-consultants.org

• Hire someone trained by in arboriculture to do any pruning work: ISA-arbor.com
IN A NUTSHELL

• **Hire a professional** to help generate a thoughtfully considered approach to all design aspects:
  - Landscape Architecture
  - Architecture
  - Materials & furnishings
  - Plant selection
  - Irrigation design
  - Environmental benefits
RESOURCES

- FIRESCAPING by Douglas Kent
- UC ANR pubs
- CalFire.CA.gov
- Fire Safe Sonoma
- ReScapeCA
A FIRESCAPED GARDEN IS NEVER CREATED ONCE, BUT MAINTAINED OVER A LIFETIME

-Douglas Kent

Photo credit: University of Wisconsin Ecosystem and Landscape Ecology Lab