

FIRESCAPING WITH NATIVE PLANTS

San Mateo County, California

Firescaping is the use of proper plant selection, placement, and maintenance around homes to reduce the threat of wildfire. This list of suggested species is intended to guide homeowners in selecting some of the more commonly available native plants adapted to the San Mateo County climate. Drought-resistant native plants require less water to stay alive and well-hydrated. No plant is completely fire-resistant, but by using appropriate plant choices and by attentively managing the landscape around the property a homeowner can significantly reduce the risk of fire. Detailed guidance given elsewhere in this brochure is a must-read. Here is a summary of some of the more important considerations in planting and managing a firescape:

- Prune shrubs annually to remove dead wood, low branches, fine twigs.
- Thin shrubs and woody plants to create spaces between them - break up continuous vegetation.
- Use low-growing plants or mulch to prevent erosion and reduce fuel.
- Plants with broad leaves are generally a better choice than plants with thin, needle-like leaves.
- Weed out invasive annuals; dense patches of these dry weeds are highly flammable.
- Keep trees and tall shrubs away from structures; avoid creating “fire ladders”
- If native plants are already present around the house, don’t necessarily clear them all but selectively thin, prune, and manage them.

Plants on this list can be found at most commercial nurseries specializing in native plants. Some plants will do well along the coast, others in the warmer inland areas. A native plant nursery will recommend plants suited to your specific habitat conditions.

NATIVE SHRUBS

Common Name

Coffeeberry (prostrate forms)
 Spiny redberry
 California lilac (many varieties and forms)
 Golden-yarrow
 California rose
 Snowberry
 Creeping snowberry
 Silk tassel bush
 Toyon
 Western redbud
 Bearberry
 Manzanitas (many varieties and forms)
 Bush poppy
 Coyote brush - prostrate form
 Currant (many species)
 Holly-leaved cherry
 Mountain mahogany

Scientific Name

Rhamnus californica
Rhamnus crocea
Ceanothus spp.
Eriophyllum confertiflorum
Rosa californica
Symphoricarpos albus
Symphoricarpos mollis
Garrya elliptica
Heteromeles arbutifolia
Cercis occidentalis
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi
Arctostaphylos spp.
Dendromecon rigida
Baccharis pilularis
Ribes spp.
Prunus ilicifolia
Cercocarpus betuloides

NATIVE TREES

Common Name

Coast live oak
 Black oak
 Canyon live oak
 California buckeye
 Madrone
 Catalina ironwood

Scientific Name

Quercus agrifolia
Quercus kelloggii
Quercus chrysolepsis
Aesculus californica
Arbutus menziesii
Lyonothamnus floribundus

NATIVE TREES (RIPARIAN OR IRRIGATED AREAS)

Common Name

Coast redwood
 Western sycamore
 Valley oak
 Willows
 Big-leaf maple

Scientific Name

Sequoia sempervirens
Platanus racemosa
Quercus lobata
Salix spp.
Acer macrophyllum

FIRESCAPING WITH NATIVE PLANTS
San Mateo County, California

NATIVE SHRUBS (RIPARIAN OR IRRIGATED AREAS)

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>
Mock orange	<i>Philadelphus lewisii</i>
California barberry	<i>Berberis pinnata</i>
Blue elderberry	<i>Sambucus mexicana</i>
Thimbleberry	<i>Rubus parviflorus</i>
Creek dogwood	<i>Cornus sericea</i> ssp. <i>occidentalis</i>
Flowering currant	<i>Ribes sanguineum</i> var. <i>glutinsum</i>
Bush anemone	<i>Carpenteria californica</i>

NATIVE PERENNIALS

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>
California poppy	<i>Eschscholtzia californica</i>
Chaparral penstemon	<i>Penstemon heterophyllus</i>
Firecracker penstemon	<i>Penstemon centranthifolius</i>
California buttercup	<i>Ranunculus californica</i>
Hummingbird sage	<i>Salvia spathacea</i>
Western columbine	<i>Aquilegia formosa</i>
Sticky monkeyflower	<i>Mimulus aurantiacus</i>
California fuchsia	<i>Epilobium canum</i>
California goldenrod	<i>Solidago californica</i>
Creeping sage	<i>Salvia sonomensis</i>
Coyote mint	<i>Monardella villosa</i>

NATIVE FERNS

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>
Western sword fern	<i>Polystichum munitum</i>
Giant chain fern	<i>Woodwardia fimbriata</i>
Coastal wood fern	<i>Dryopteris arguta</i>
Bracken	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>

NATIVE GROUNDCOVERS, BUNCHGRASSES

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>
Blue-eyed grass	<i>Sisyrinchium bellum</i>
Douglas' iris	<i>Iris douglasiana</i>
Yerba buena	<i>Satureja douglasii</i>
Strawberry	<i>Fragaria vesca</i>
Dudleya	<i>Dudleya cymosa</i>
Pacific stonecrop	<i>Sedum spathulifolium</i>
Spreading rush	<i>Juncus patens</i>
Foothill sedge	<i>Carex tumulicola</i>
Purple needlegrass	<i>Nassella pulchra</i>
Deer grass	<i>Muhlenbergia rigens</i>
California fescue	<i>Festuca californica</i>

INVASIVE AND/OR HIGH FIRE HAZARD PLANTS

--NOT RECOMMENDED FOR FIRESCAPING

Acacia; pampas grass; gorse; juniper; eucalyptus;
 all conifers, including pines, cypress, Douglas fir, spruce,
 cedar, hemlock; pepper tree; bamboo; palms; periwinkle (*Vinca*);
 Algerian, English, or German ivy; French, Spanish, or Scotch broom.