

Quick Guide to Firewise Shrubs

- Select the “right plant for the right place” by choosing plants that are well adapted to the conditions where they are to be planted and by considering their flammability characteristics.
- Conduct routine landscape maintenance, such as pruning shrubs, to maintain vertical and horizontal separation from other plants.
- Periodically remove dead or diseased plant material from plants within your home landscape.
- Remember, there are no “fireproof” plants. All plants and organic mulches burn in extreme weather or fire conditions.
- The 34 shrubs shown here were selected for testing based on responses to a survey from fire professionals across the southern United States.
- To estimate the flammability of shrub and other plant species not shown here, see “Preparing a Firewise Plant List for WUI Residents” at www.interfacesouth.org/products/fact_sheets/Preparing_Firewise_Plant_List.pdf or www.interfacesouth.org/products/flammability_key.html.

Did you know you can select shrubs based on their flammability?

Researchers at the U.S. Forest Service, University of Florida, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology used three flammability categories to indicate how easily and intensely a shrub will burn: high, moderate, and low.

Moderate Flammability

Use cautiously in isolated landscape beds within the defensible space, 15 feet or more from the house.

High Flammability

Plant these shrubs 30 feet or more away from the house. Maintain them regularly.



Chinese juniper
Juniperus chinensis



Dwarf yaupon
Ilex vomitoria



Gallberry/Inkberry
Ilex glabra



Mountain laurel
Kalmia latifolia



Ashe juniper
Juniperus ashei



Boxwood
Buxus microphylla
var. *koreana*



Pipestem
Agarista populifolia



Hershey's Red Azalea
Rhododendron obtusum



Glossy abelia
Abelia x grandiflora



Rhododendron
Rhododendron
x chionoides



Blue holly
Ilex x meservea



Leyland cypress
Cupressocyparis leylandii

Low Flammability

Shrubs suitable for planting within the defensible space; plant 6 feet or more from the house.



Adam's needle
Yucca filamentosa



Anisetree
Illicium floridanum



Arrowwood
Viburnum dentatum



Bayberry
Myrica pennsylvanica



Beautyberry
Callicarpa dichotoma



Bigleaf hydrangea
Hydrangea macrophylla



Butterfly bush
Buddleia davidi



Camellia
Camellia japonica



Coontie
Zamia pumila



Foster holly
Ilex x attenuata



Gardenia
Gardenia jasminoides



Klein's forsythia
Forsythia x intermedia



Oakleaf hydrangea
Hydrangea quercifolia



Oleander
Nerium oleander



Pittosporum
Pittosporum tobira



Rosebay
Rhododendron maximum



Scarlet firethorn
Pyracantha coccinea
var. *mohave*



Shrubby cinquefoil
Potentilla fruticosa



Sweet pepperbush
Clethra alnifolia



Walter's viburnum
Viburnum obovatum



Weigela
Weigela florida



Winterberry
Ilex verticillata

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To view this fact sheet online, visit http://www.interfacesouth.org/products/pdf/Shrub_Flammability.pdf. For the Spanish version, visit www.interfacesouth.org/products/pdf/Shrub_Flammability_es.pdf

Additional Resources

- For Firewise landscaping tips, see www.interfacesouth.org/products/fact_sheets/Selecting_Maintaining_Firewise_Plants_Landscaping.pdf and www.interfacesouth.org/products/fact_sheets/Reducing_Wildfire_Risk.pdf
- Also visit: www.interfacesouth.org/research.html
- For information about the Firewise program visit: www.firewise.org

The photographs in this fact sheet were gathered from various sources. All copyrighted photographs in this publication were used with the permission of the photographers. Shrubs are listed in alphabetical order and not by their intensity of flammability within each category. Published September 2009.

