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SUMMER HOURS

NURSERY: 6:00 am to 2:30 pm

OFFICE: 6:00 am to 3:30 pm

Monday through Friday. Closed Weekends.

(Starting Sept. 29th, Nursery and Office

open 7:00 am to 4:30 pm)

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 17-19

Engineering Green, 2003 National Urban Forest Conference

Adam's Mark Hotel, San Antonio, TX.
Co-sponsored by American Forests, the
Texas Urban Forestry Council, San
Antonio City Public Service, and the
Texas Forest Service. Information: Call
703.904.7508 or visit the American
Forests website at
www.americanforests.org/conference/

SEPTEMBER 18-19

Southwest Horticultural Trade Show and Conference

Phoenix Civic Plaza, Phoenix, AZ.
Sponsored by the Arizona Nursery
Association. Information: Contact ANA at
480.966.1610 or visit www.azna.org

SEPTEMBER 19

Rocky Mountain Area Meeting, International Plant Propagator's Society

Denver Botanical Gardens, Denver, CO.
Information: Contact Brain Core at
303.655.4284 or e-mail to
greenhouse-guy@juno.com

OCTOBER 8-9

Turfgrass & Landscape Expo

FairPlex, Pomona, CA. Sponsored by the
Southern California Turfgrass Council.
Information: Contact
expo@turfCouncil.org or call SCTC office
at 800.500.SCTC (7282) or 818.764-
5016 or visit <http://www.turfCouncil.org>

OCTOBER 17-18

"Water: Our Future, Our Legacy," Xeriscape Conference 2003

Albuquerque Convention Center,
Albuquerque, NM. Information: Contact
505.468.1021 or visit
www.xeriscapenm.com

OCTOBER 22-23

Western Nursery and Garden Expo

Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas,
NV. Sponsored by the California
Association of Nurseries and Garden
Centers. Information: Call 800.748.6214
or visit www.westernexpo.com

OCTOBER 23-26

California Urban Forest Conference

Long Beach Hilton, Long Beach, CA.
Sponsored by the California Urban Forests
Council (CUFC) and California ReLeaf.
Information: Contact 707.524-1190, fax:
707-524-1986, e-mail info@caufc.org or
visit <http://www.caufc.org>

NOVEMBER 6-8

Desert Green VII

Henderson Convention Center, Henderson,
NV. Information: Contact ML Robinson at
702.257.5529,
robinsonm@UNCE.unr.edu. For exhibitor
information, contact Helen Stone at
702.454.3057,
helen@swtreesandturf.com

September/October

FIRE! FRIEND OR FOE?

Fire has been an ally of humans for centuries; a tool to provide warmth from the cold, heat for cooking and protection from dangerous animals. Beyond these obvious uses, Native Americans recognized the value of fire in maintaining the health of both prairie and woodland. Observant in all aspects of nature, the aboriginal people instinctively set fires to improve the forage for wild game and to reduce the buildup of fuel in woodlands. They saw that insects and disease were controlled naturally and that the forests and grasslands remained healthy, renewed by the nutrients released following fire. Yes, fire was a useful tool. Nature had prescribed it!

In the wake of the numerous recent wildfires experienced throughout the west there are some who may disagree, especially if property or life was lost. In this day and age many people own second homes or getaways located in rural settings. Those that choose to live in non-urban areas often place themselves in sites that at one time had fire as a regular visitor. It is said that if you live in a wooded area it is just a matter of time before a fire will strike.

Years of fire suppression has led to increased fuel loads in our natural forests making them dangerous powder kegs for wildfire. Accompanied by the ongoing drought throughout the west our

forests are even more susceptible to insect attack and disease. There are more dead trees and an increase in the fuel load. Living in the midst of a forest may be desirable, but it also makes the dwellings prime targets for fire, not to mention some pretty nervous homeowners. Like the Boy Scout motto says, one must "Be Prepared".

The concept of defensible and fire-resistant landscaping is nothing new. Forestry units throughout the country offer a wealth of information regarding fire education through countless publications and web sites. Yet each year we see the live video feeds and read the newspaper accounts regarding scores of homes lost in our forests. Perhaps some of the losses could have been avoided by following some simple recommendations.

DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Maintain a truly defensible space around the dwelling by removing flammable vegetation. The recommendations regarding the distance from a dwelling and the nearest vegetation vary from 30 feet to 100 feet or more depending on the density of the forest and the topography. Remember, this space protects the forest as well should a fire occur in the dwelling. When selecting a home site, level lots are preferable over hillsides. Slopes can make fire fighting

extremely challenging. Canyons can act as a conduit for the advance of fire, or if blocked prevent the arrival of equipment or a timely escape. Select your property carefully.

Enhance the defensible space through the appropriate use of driveways, gravel paths or masonry retaining walls to function as firebelts. Be sure to make the site readily accessible to fire equipment, leaving ample space around each structure.

Thin the number of trees by removing the less desirable ones while leaving the more valuable specimens in a widely spaced manner. Trees on level ground should be at least 10 feet between canopies. Those on slopes should be spaced approximately 30 feet apart. Trees may be grouped together but maintain similar distances between the clumps of trees. Consider the removal of unhealthy diseased or insect ridden trees, leaning specimens or those with weak crotches.

If possible, provide the plant material near the dwelling with irrigation. Well-watered groundcovers and fire-resistant plants will be less likely to burn. The irrigation provided for the landscape should extend as far away from the property as is practical.

PROPER PLANT SELECTION

The choice of suitable plant material for the landscape is one subject that might be open for considerable debate. Remember that all plants will burn provided the conditions are right. Choosing the best plant material can be quite challenging considering variables in elevation, precipitation and plant availability. Some experts say that only native plants should be utilized when considering landscape materials. That sentiment should be tempered by the fact that many native trees within our forests are conifers. Trees such as pines, spruce, fir and juniper often contain higher levels of oil and pitch, which makes them highly flammable. At lower elevations, avoid the use of trees such as Eucalyptus and certain Acacias, especially trees with shaggy bark.

Broad-leaved, deciduous trees tend to be more fire resistant. Provided that irrigation is available, the use of aspen and other species of poplar might be suitable. Others species include ash, birch, locust, hackberry, oak, Pistache, redbud, and desert willow. Observe the native tree population and choose similar species.

Near dwellings, consider low growing plant material such as grasses, perennials or groundcovers. Plants that are evergreen or mat forming are superior in weed suppression and fire resistance. In warmer regions, succulents such as ice plant, agaves and aloes are good choices. Plantings should be widely spaced in small groupings or clusters separated by boulders or bare areas.

When choosing plants for your landscape, be sure to consult local resources. A plant recommended for the hillsides in Utah or New Mexico may be less than ideal for sites in California or Nevada. Cold hardiness should be a primary concern to ensure winter survival. Others considerations would be ease of maintenance and water consumption. In some areas invasiveness of the species may be critical. Your local county extension agent should be able to help you with your plant selection.

FIREWISE MAINTENANCE

Be aware of the growth habits of your landscape plants and their seasonal changes.

Remove weeds and brush from around trees and shrubs that might act as a “fuel ladder” allowing flames near the ground to access taller trees. Maintain the defensible space by removing layers of leaf litter, pine needles or dry grasses.

While you have the chain saw running, go ahead and remove dead limbs or low-hanging branches from remaining trees. Most experts recommend a distance of 6 to 10 feet from the ground.

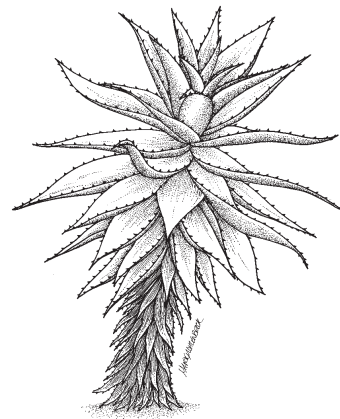
Caution should be taken to not remove too much of the live tissue of a tree during a pruning session. Less than 30% would be advisable. Also pay particular attention to any limbs that might potentially drop on a structure.

During periods of drought remove any annual or perennial plants that may have dried up. Mow down taller grasses during fire season, especially if not irrigated. Prioritize the trees that will receive available irrigation water and remove those that cannot be irrigated.

FIRE RESTORATION

Once fire has occurred the priorities change temporarily. Of primary concern is erosion control. This is critical to reduce the damage to watersheds. Often grasses and forbs are seeded immediately following a fire in order to take advantage of the ground disturbance and to minimize erosion. Obviously spring and fall seeding would be preferred. As a rule, trees and shrubs should be planted during the period of dormancy or when natural conditions improve survival.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service can assist with recommended species of grasses and seeding rates. They will also be able to provide information regarding rates and timing of application along with weed suppression.



SUITABLE SPECIES

Groundcovers	Special Requirements
Acacia redolens	Desert Carpet™
Ajuga spp.	Bugleweed Shade Irrigation
Aloe spp.	Aloe Dry
Baccharis spp.	Coyote Bush Dry
Dalea greggii	Trailing Indigo Bush Dry
Erigeron karvinskianus	Santa Barbara Daisy Dry
Gazania rigens	Gazania Irrigation
Rosmarinus officinalis	Rosemary
Teucrium chamaedrys	Germander
Verbena spp.	Verbena

Perennials	Special Requirements
Aquilegia spp.	Columbine Shade Irrigation
Artemisia spp.	Wormwood Dry
Erigeron spp.	Fleabane Irrigation in summer
Linum spp.	Flax Poor soil
Lupine spp.	Bluebonnets Poor soil
Oenothera spp.	Primrose Poor soil
Penstemon spp.	Beardtongue Well drained
Perovskia atriplicifolia	Russian Sage Irrigation in summer
Salvia spp.	Sage

Shrubs and Accents	Special Requirements
Agave spp.	Century Plants Dry
Aloe spp.	Aloe Dry
Atriplex spp.	Saltbush Dry
Buddleia spp.	Butterfly Bush
Caesalpinia spp.	Bird of Paradise Dry
Calliandra spp.	Fairy Duster Dry
Cercocarpus montanus	Mountain Mahogany Dry
Convolvulus cneorum	Bush Morning Glory Dry
Cowania mexicana (Purshia)	Bitterbush Dry
Dasyliirion spp.	Desert Spoon Dry
Encelia spp.	Brittlebush Dry
Erigonum spp.	Buckwheat Dry
Fouquieria spp.	Ocotillo Dry
Hesperaloe spp.	Red Yucca Dry
Justicia spp.	Chuparosa Dry

Shrubs and Accents (cont'd)	Special Requirements
Larrea tridentata	Creosote Bush Dry
Leucophyllum spp.	Texas Rangers Dry
Lobelia laxiflora	Mexican Bush Lobelia Dry
Lonicera spp.	Honeysuckle
Nerium oleander	Oleander Dry
Opuntia spp.	Opuntia Dry
Phlomis fruticosa	Jerusalem Sage
Portulacaria afra	Elephant's Food Dry
Prunus besseyi	Sand Cherry Dry
Rhus ovata	Sugar Bush Dry
Rosa woodsii	Wood's Rose
Salvia spp.	Sage Dry
Senna spp. (Cassia)	Senna Dry
Simmondsia chinensis	Jojoba Dry
Wedelia trilobata	Wedelia
Yucca spp.	Yucca Dry

Trees	Special Requirements
Acacia farnesiana	Sweet Acacia Dry
Acacia greggii	Catclaw Dry
Acacia saligna	Willow Acacia Dry
Acacia smallii	Sweet Acacia Dry
Acacia stenophylla	Shoestring Acacia Dry
Bauhinia spp.	Orchid Tree Dry
Brahea armata	Mexican Blue Palm Dry
Cercis spp.	Redbud Irrigation in summer
Chilopsis linearis	Desert Willow Dry
Chitalpa tashkentensis	Chitalpa Dry
Fraxinus spp.	Ash Irrigation in summer
Geijera parvifolia	Australian Willow Dry
Parkinsonia spp.	Palo Verde Dry
Pistacia spp.	Pistache Irrigation in summer
Platanus spp.	Sycamore Irrigation in summer
Populus spp.	Cottonwood, aspen Irrigation in summer
Prosopis spp.	Mesquite Dry
Quercus spp.	Oak Irrigation in summer
Salix spp.	Willow Supplemental water
Ziziphus spp.	Jujube Dry

To see photos of these plants and more, check out our website at www.mswm.com