



Community *Fire Safe*

FIRE RETARDANT PLANTS

When planning your garden and property for fire protection, it's important to consider plants as an integral part of your overall fire protection plan. Yet no plant is completely fire-resistant. Some are more flammable than others, **but given the right conditions all plants will burn.**

Flammability

There are two basic factors to be considered in determining a plant's flammability: the first is how readily it burns and the second is how its form influences the way it burns. 'Flammability' then is, or should be, the outcome of these two factors.

1. Plants with broad fleshy leaves and/or high salt content burn less readily than those with fine hard leaves (sclerophyll). Plants with significant amounts of volatile oils, like the eucalypt family (which includes gums and tea trees) should be avoided close to dwellings.
2. The influence of plant form is a lot more subjective: low growing plants and ground covers are better than shrubs; plants with dense foliage are better than those with open airy crowns; plants that don't retain dead material are better than those that hold up lots of fuel; plants with smooth bark are better than those with stringy or ribbon bark.

Role of Fire Retardant Plants

Fire retardant plants can absorb more of the heat of the approaching wildfire without burning than flammable plants. Fire retardant trees can trap embers and sparks and reduce wind speeds near your house if correctly positioned and maintained. Fire retardant ground covers can be used to slow the travel of a fire through the litter layer and fire retardant shrubs can be used to separate the litter layer from the trees above.



If fire retardant plants are grown, a firm commitment must be made to maintain them.

Maintenance

If fire retardant plants are to be grown, a firm commitment must be made to regularly maintain them or they may become a fire hazard. This includes sufficient watering so a high leaf moisture content is maintained, the removal of dead material and regular pruning of lower branches. Water availability is likely to be a problem in drier months when the threat of fire is greatest.

Environmental Weeds

All gardeners should be aware that some plants are not wanted in the bush even if they are valued in the garden. Unfortunately there are many ornamental plants that really take off when they get into the bush. Some do so well they choke out the natives, like blackberries, or become a fire hazard, like gorse. Predicting whether a plant will become an environmental weed is not easy so it's good practice to consult with your local council or the National Parks and Wildlife Service to determine its suitability for your area. Alternatively you could contact your local Landcare or Bushcare Group (Trees for Life) for information on species that are indigenous to your area. They may even supply plants propagated from seeds collected locally.

Introduced trees and shrubs that are hard to burn:

<i>Acer campestre</i>	Common maple
<i>Acer negundo</i>	Box-elder maple
<i>Acer platanoides</i>	Norway maple
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore
<i>Actinidia chinensis</i>	Kiwi fruit
<i>Agapanthus praecox</i>	Agapanthus
<i>Alnus jorulensis</i>	Evergreen alder
<i>Artemisia sp</i>	Wormwood or Angels hair
<i>Calodendron capense</i>	Cape chestnut
<i>Camellia cvs</i>	Camellia
<i>Canna indica</i>	Canna lilly
<i>Capsicum annum</i>	
<i>var fasciculatum</i>	Chilli
<i>Cassia floribunda</i>	Smooth cassia
<i>Castanea dentata</i>	American chestnut
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Sweet chestnut
<i>Ceanothus papillosus</i>	Pacific blue
<i>Ceratonia siliqua</i>	Carob
<i>Cercis siliquastrum</i>	Judus tree
<i>Chaenomeles japonica</i>	Flowering quince
<i>Citrus nobilis</i>	Mandarin
<i>Cornus capitata</i>	Evergreen dogwood
<i>Corynocarpus Laevigatus</i>	New Zealand laurel
<i>Cyphomandra betacea</i>	Tamarillo
<i>Delonix regia</i>	Poinciana
<i>Diospyros sp.</i>	Persimmon
<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>	Russian olive
<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i>	Loquat
<i>Escallonia macrantha</i>	Escallonia
<i>Euryops pectinatus</i>	Yellow daisy bush
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Common beech
<i>Griselinia littoralis</i>	New Zealand broadleaf
<i>Hebe speciosa</i>	Veronica
<i>Hibiscus cvs</i>	Hibiscus
<i>Hydrangea macrophylla</i>	Hydrangea
<i>Juglans nigra</i>	Black walnut
<i>Koelreuteria paniculata</i>	Golden rain tree
<i>Laurus nobilis</i>	Laurel
<i>Lavendula angustiflora</i>	English lavender
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i>	Liquidambar
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Tulip tree
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	Magnolia
<i>Morus spp.</i>	Mulberry
<i>Pelargonium peltatum</i>	Geranium
<i>Photinia glabra</i>	Red-leaf photinia
<i>Photinia serrulata</i>	Chinese hawthorn
<i>Pittosporum eugenioides</i>	Tarata
<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	Cherry laurel
<i>Prunus lusitanica</i>	Portugal laural
<i>Quercus canariensis</i>	Algerian oak
<i>Quercus cerris</i>	Turkey oak
<i>Quercus ilex</i>	Holm oak
<i>Rhododendron sp.</i>	Rhododendron
<i>Solanum melongera</i>	egg plant
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan
<i>Spathodea campanulata</i>	African tulip tree
<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>	Lilac
<i>Tilia vulgaris</i>	Linden
<i>Ulmus sp.</i>	Elm
<i>Weigela florida</i>	Fairy trumpets

Native trees and shrubs that are hard to burn:

<i>Acacia decurrens</i>	Green wattle
<i>Acacia glandulicarpa</i>	Hairy pod wattle
<i>Acacia howettii</i>	Sticky wattle
<i>Acacia mearnsii</i>	Black wattle
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood
<i>Acacia podalyrifolia</i>	Mt Morgan Wattle
<i>Acacia pravissima</i>	Ovens wattle
<i>Acacia promoinens</i>	Golden rain wattle
<i>Acacia terminalis</i>	Cedar wattle
<i>Acacia vestita</i>	Hairy wattle
<i>Acmena smithii</i>	Lilly pillly
<i>Agonis juniperina</i>	Juniper myrtle
<i>Angophora costata</i>	Gum myrtle
<i>Anigozanthos spp.</i>	Kangaroo paw
<i>Araucaria heterophylla</i>	Norfolk Island pine
<i>Atherosperma moschatum</i>	Sassafras
<i>Atriplex sp.</i>	Saltbush
<i>Bedfordia salincina</i>	Blanket bush
<i>Beyeria viscosa</i>	Pinkwood
<i>Casuarina cristata</i>	Belah
<i>Casuarina cunninghamiana</i>	River she-oak
<i>Dicksonia antarctica</i>	Tree fern
<i>Diplarrena moraea</i>	White flag iris
<i>Eremophilia spp.</i>	Emu bush
<i>Eucalyptus maculata</i>	spotted gum
<i>Ficus macrophylla</i>	Moreton Bay fig
<i>Grevillia aquifolium</i>	Prickly grevillia
<i>Grevillia barklyana</i>	Gully grevillia
<i>Grevillia victoriae</i>	
<i>Hakea elliptica</i>	
<i>Heterodendrum oleifolium</i>	Cattlebush
<i>Hymenosporum flavum</i>	Native fragipanni
<i>Kochia spp.</i>	Bluebushes
<i>Lagunaria patersonii</i>	Pyramid tree
<i>Melaleuca lanceolata</i>	Moonah
<i>Melia azedarach</i>	White cedar
<i>Myoporum acuminatum</i>	Boobialla
<i>Myoporum insulare</i>	Boobialla
<i>Olearia axillaris.</i>	
<i>Passiflora herbertianna</i>	Native passionfruit
<i>Pomaderris apetala</i>	Dogwood
<i>Tristania sp.</i>	eg: Brush box

Ground cover plants that are hard to burn:

<i>Ajunga reptans</i>	Bugle
<i>Arcotheca calendula</i>	
<i>Carpobrotus spp.</i>	Pigface
<i>Chrysanthemum indicum</i>	Chrysanthemum
<i>Coprosma 'kirkii'</i>	
<i>Cymbopogon citratus</i>	Lemon grass
<i>Delosperma 'alba'</i>	
<i>Drosanthemum floribundum</i>	
<i>Drosanthemum hispidum</i>	
<i>Helianthemum spp.</i>	Sunroses
<i>Hemerocallis aurantiaca</i>	Day lilly
<i>Hymenocallis littoralis</i>	Spider lilly
<i>Kennedia spp.</i>	Coral peas
<i>Lampranthus multiradiatus</i>	Noonflower
<i>Myoporum pavifolium</i>	Creeping myoporum
<i>Pelargonium spp.</i>	Pelargoniums
<i>Portulacaria spp.</i>	Jade plants
<i>Rhagodia spp.</i>	Saltbush
<i>Rosmarinus offianalis</i>	Rosemary (prostrate form)
<i>prostratus</i>	
<i>Sedum spp.</i>	Stone crops

Further Information:

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