



Firewise Landscaping

Katlin Miller
Middle Park Conservation District
www.middleparkcd.com
middleparkcd@gmail.com
970-531-0127

Images from Google Images

Importance of Firewise Landscaping

It is a little-known fact that in the absence of a defensible space, firefighters will often bypass a house, choosing to make their stand at a home where their safety is more assured and the chance to successfully protect the structure is greater.



Tips from CSU Extension Fact Sheet 6.303

Firewise Landscaping Tips

It is often more important **HOW** and **WHERE** you plant than **WHAT** you plant

- **Plants nearest home:**
 - More widely spread and lower growing than those farther away
- **Use non-combustible material for first 5 feet surrounding home**
 - Gravel and rocks or pavement



Images from BLM's Firewise Plants for Front & Backyards Presentation

Tips from CSU Extension Fact Sheet 6.303

Firewise Landscaping Tips

- **Plant vegetation in small clusters (islands) instead of large masses**
- **Use stepping stones, rocks, or gravel to create pathways/fuel breaks**
 - Slows the rate of spread
 - Modifies fire behavior
- **Species diversity is key**
 - Looks better and
 - Less chance of widespread disease/insect outbreak



Images from BLM's Firewise Plants for Front & Backyards Presentation

Tips from CSU Extension Fact Sheet 6.303

Firewise Landscaping Tips

- In the event of drought, water plants nearest the home first
- Best species are often those that occur naturally in the area
- Remove leaf litter and needles as they build up throughout the season
- Remove plants damaged by snow or wind



Images from Google Images

Tips from CSU Extension Fact Sheet 6.303

Grass & Ground Cover

- Mow grasses low to the ground nearest the home, outbuildings, firewood pile, and shrubs
- Keep grass nearest the home adequately watered
- Keep grasses mowed in dry seasons
 - Before green up in the spring, late summer, fall
- Plant ground cover species in areas where mowing is infeasible
 - Prevents soil erosion, retains soil moisture, chokes weeds



Images from Google Images

Species Recommendations from CSU Fact Sheet 6.306

Species to Consider

• Grasses

- Blue grama
- Western Wheatgrass
- Streambank Wheatgrass
- Sheep Fescue



Images from Google Images

Tips from CSU Extension Fact Sheet 6.303

Wildflowers

- Disperse wildflowers throughout desired area
- Maintain separation between flower beds
- Do NOT plant flower beds next to structures unless watered regularly
- Mow or remove wildflowers when they go to seed and their stems are dry



Images from Google Images

Species Recommendations from CSU Fact Sheet 6.305

Species to Consider

• Flowers & Ground Cover

- Yarrow
- Fringed sage
- Columbine
- Pinks
- Creeping Thyme
- Fireweed
- Blanket flower
- Blue flax
- Stonecrop
- Beebalm
- Cinquefoil
- Coreopsis
- Goldenrod
- Wild geranium
- Sulphur flower
- Black-eyed Susan
- Lavender
- Coneflower
- Native Iris



Images from Google Images

Tips from CSU Extension Fact Sheet 6.303

Shrubs

- **Do NOT plant shrubs under trees, next to structures, under decks, or near firewood piles or other flammable materials**
 - They will act as "ladder fuels"
- **Mow grass near shrubs**
- **Plant shrubs individually or in small clumps**
- **Do NOT plant common juniper**
 - If you have common juniper near the home, REMOVE IT!!!

Image from
BLM's
Firewise
Plants for
Front &
Backyards
Presentation

Rule of Thumb:
Space shrubs at
a distance of 2x
their height

Species Recommendations from CSU Fact Sheet 6.305

Species to Consider

• Shrubs

- Kinnikinnick
- Mountain mohogany
- Rabbitbrush
- Red-osier Dogwood
- Shrubby cinquefoil
- Golden Currant
- Buffaloberry
- Snowberry
- Wild Rose
- Antelope bitterbrush
- Cotoneaster



Images from Google Images

Tips from CSU Extension Fact Sheet 6.303

Trees

- **Deciduous trees are less flammable than coniferous trees**
- **Do NOT plant trees directly next to structures**
- **Maintain at least 10' between trees**
- **On steep slopes, plant trees at least 20-25' apart**
- **Limb up your trees**
 - One-third of the height of the tree or up to 10'



Species Recommendations from CSU Fact Sheet 6.305

Species to Consider

• Larger Shrubs & Trees

- Aspen
- Cottonwoods
- Willows
- Lilac
- Serviceberry
- Chokecherry
- Native plum
- Thinleaf Alder



Images from Google Images

Diagram of Firewise Landscaping Principles

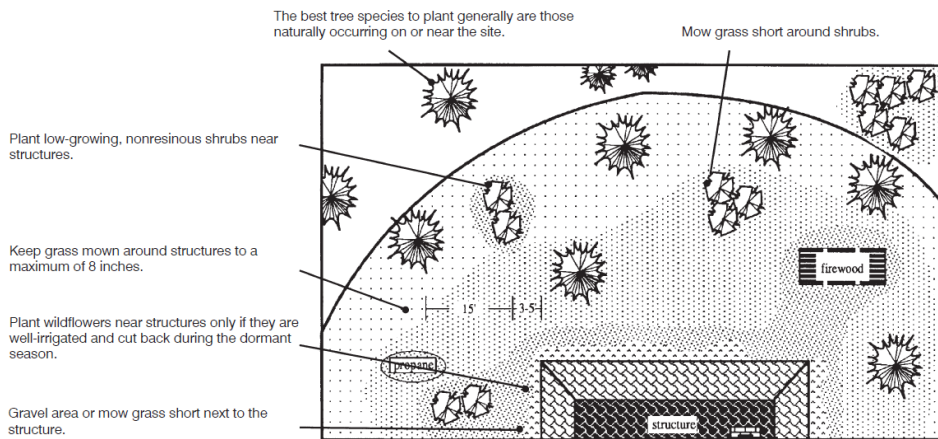


Figure 1: Forested property surrounding a homesite shows optimum placement of vegetation near the structure.

Images from CSU Extension "Firewise Plant Materials" Factsheet 6.305

Hardscaping

- Use of man-made materials and features rather than vegetation to create a beautifully-scaped outdoor space
- Ideas:
 - Stone retaining walls
 - Tile patios
 - Gravel pathways
 - Metal or rock sculptures
 - Water fountains & features
 - Driveway pavers
 - Wrought-iron fences
- Google “Hardscaping” for more ideas



Take Home Messages

- Planting Firewise plants alone will not entirely protect you in the event of wildfire
- It is also about the placement of those plants with respect to ignitable surfaces and structures
- Once you have planted the correct plant in the correct manner, you **MUST** maintain them properly
- Consider hardscaping your outdoor space



Resources to Read

- **CSU Extension Fact Sheets** Click to go to website
 - 6.302, *Creating Wildfire-Defensible Zones*
 - 6.303, *Fire-Resistant Landscaping*
 - 6.304, *Forest Home Fire Safety*
 - 6.305, *Firewise Plant Materials*
 - 6.306, *Grass Seed Mixes to Reduce Wildfire Hazard*
 - 7.233, *Wildflowers for Colorado*
 - 7.406, *Flowers for Mountain Communities*
 - 7.413, *Ground Covers for Mountain Communities*
 - 7.423, *Trees and Shrubs for Mountain Areas*



MPCD's Tree Seedling & Perennial Sales

- **Sale starts NOW**
- **Delivered in May to Frisco**
- **Variety of sizes and species**
- **Relative cheap prices**
- **Best to order soon because some species/sizes sell out early**

Contact...

Katlin Miller
Middle Park Conservation District
www.middleparkcd.com
middleparkcd@gmail.com
 970-531-0127

