

## Landscaping for Fire Safety

If ever there was a compelling motivation to review your fire safety habits, it would have to be the recent Fort McMurray wildfire that raged in Alberta, Canada.

Though you're often feel powerless against Mother Nature, there are some home modifications you can make to improve the odds that your home will be spared during wildfire.

One is firescaping, which entails strategically landscaping your property to minimize or prevent damage during a blaze.

And since the spring and summer gardening season is here, now is an ideal time to make some crucial landscape changes, especially if you live in a fire-prone region.

Here are nine considerations.

1. **Defensible space.** Understand the three zones that surround your house and learn about what to plant in each section. For more, see

<http://bcwildfire.ca/Prevention/docs/homeowner-firesmart.pdf>.

The aim is to create defensible space, and the 30 feet closest to your house, for instance, should be a zone that excludes the most flammable plants, trees, and shrubs.

2. **Assess your home and landscape.** Figure out your home's vulnerabilities to fire. This quiz about your landscaping and home characteristics can help you gauge your home's fire risk and understand specific steps to take to diminish that risk.  
<http://firecenter.berkeley.edu/homeassessment/index.pl#>

3. **Fire-resistant plants.** No plant or tree is fire-proof, but you can choose ones that are more resistant to fire. For instance, consider planting maples and poplar trees, which are less flammable than pines and firs. Learn more about appropriate plants: <http://firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness/firewise-landscaping-and-plant-lists.aspx?sso=0>

4. **Dead and dry = danger.** Get rid of dead weeds, shrubs, twigs, tree limbs, grass, plants, and pine needles around your house, on the roof, and in your gutters.
5. **Hardscape.** Incorporate stones, brick, gravel and other hardscape material into your landscape. They're less flammable and can reduce the chance of fire spreading across your property.
6. **Trim and prune.** Trim any branches hanging over your roof and keep branches at least 10 feet away from your chimney and from one another. Look under decks for dry, flammable plants and dead vegetation and remove them.
7. **Flammable materials.** Store combustible and flammable materials, including propane tanks and gas-powered lawn tools, firewood piles, and so forth, at least 30 feet from the house.
8. **Community resources.** Familiarize yourself with the resources available in your community, understand the local plan for emergencies, and how to get alerts about fires, evacuation orders, shelters, and so forth.
9. **Emergency plan.** Create your own emergency plan and have a to-go kit that you can take with you if you need to evacuate your neighborhood. That should include food, water, cash, clothes, prescription drugs, device chargers, pillows, and any other items you

need to feel safe and comfortable if you need to leave your home in a jiffy.

Learn more:

[http://www.readyforwildfire.org/docs/files/File/calfire\\_ready\\_brochure\\_LINOWeb.pdf](http://www.readyforwildfire.org/docs/files/File/calfire_ready_brochure_LINOWeb.pdf)

<http://www.firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness/be-firewise/home-and-landscape/defensible-space.aspx>

<http://firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness/firewise-landscaping-and-plant-lists.aspx?sso=0>

<http://ucanr.edu/sites/cfro/files/167774.pdf>

<http://ucanr.org/sites/SAFElandscapes/files/79452.pdf>

## Stroke Awareness Month

Every 40 seconds, someone in the United States experiences a stroke, the leading cause of disability and the number five cause of death.

May is stroke awareness month and it's an opportunity to get up to speed on preventing strokes, along with learning to spot stroke symptoms and how to respond when you see someone who may need help.

After all, some strokes can be treated with clot-busting drugs that allow people to recover and suffer no permanent disabilities.

But speed – getting a person into an emergency room immediately -- is critical.

Yet the American Stroke Association says that only about two out of three Americans can correctly identify at least one warning sign of a stroke.

F.A.S.T. is the acronym the American Stroke Association uses to help people recognize symptoms and to motivate them to act if they see any of the warning signs. It stands for:

**F - Face** drooping

**A - Arm** weakness

**S - Speech** difficulty

**T - Time** to call 9-1-1.

Learn more:

[http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/Professionals/Stroke-Resources-for-](http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/Professionals/Stroke-Resources-for-Professionals_UCM_308581_SubHomePage.jsp)

[Professionals\\_UCM\\_308581\\_SubHomePage.jsp,](http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/Professionals/Stroke-Prevention-Resources_UCM_451918_SubHomePage.jsp)

[http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/Professionals/Stroke-Prevention-Resources\\_UCM\\_451918\\_SubHomePage.jsp,](http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/Professionals/Stroke-Prevention-Resources_UCM_451918_SubHomePage.jsp) and

[http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/WarningSigns/Learn-More-Stroke-Warning-Signs-and-Symptoms\\_UCM\\_451207\\_Article.jsp#.VznacOT01RQ](http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/WarningSigns/Learn-More-Stroke-Warning-Signs-and-Symptoms_UCM_451207_Article.jsp#.VznacOT01RQ)

## Revolution in Aging

An aging population and increased longevity present both opportunities and challenges to the global community.

Thought leaders at the recent Milken Institute **Global Conference 2016 in May had a lot to say on the topic.**

If you're interested in their thinking about aging and longevity, encore careers, caregiving and changing how we view retirement, as well as the ripple effect that longevity can have on things like communities and the work world, check out some of the conference videos.

[http://www.milkeninstitute.org/events/conferences/global-conference/2016/program-glance/track/96.](http://www.milkeninstitute.org/events/conferences/global-conference/2016/program-glance/track/96)

## Seniors Talk

Who doesn't love an inspiring video or two from wise seniors who are aging well?

Consider Flossie Lewis's take

<https://youtu.be/0eUc7hjYlBl> on staying vital, stimulated, fashionable, and dignified as you age.

Meet Ida Keeling, a 100-year-old runner.

See <http://nyti.ms/1T3yeuR> and

[http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/04/22/at-100-still-running-for-her-life/?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&version=Most-Visible&moduleDetail=inside-nyt-region-2&module=inside-nyt-region&region=inside-nyt-region&WT.nav=inside-nyt-region&\\_r=0](http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/04/22/at-100-still-running-for-her-life/?action=click&pgtype=Homepage&version=Most-Visible&moduleDetail=inside-nyt-region-2&module=inside-nyt-region&region=inside-nyt-region&WT.nav=inside-nyt-region&_r=0)

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