FIRESCAPING IN THE FYNBOS

GARDEN IN ZONES

Plant your garden with a fire-resistant buffer zone on the periphery, a medium resistant ring within that and an approximately 3m wide zone of low resistant planting around the house.

See inside for lists of suggested plant species for each zone within **fynbos environments** (with an addendum for suitable species for the mixed vegetation area of the Garden Route, in the Southern Cape).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Contributions from Firewise USA, Living with Wildfire. Portions reproduced from an article by Clare Bell, The Garden Centre, Kirstenbosch.
Anthony Hitchcock, Dave McDonald, Wendy Madsen and Annelize Vlok are thanked for their help.
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'Firescaping your Garden' first produced in association with the Botanical Society of SA, 2001.
Edited: FireWise SA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

www.firewise.org

www.workingonfire.org

www.firewisesa.org.za
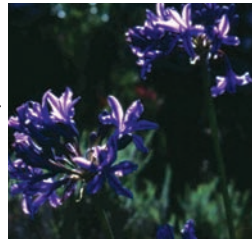
THE BUFFER ZONE

This area should be the furthest away from the house, within the essential 10 metre zone.

- Plant low-growing **groundcovers** with fleshy leaves that have a high resistance to fire like vygies (*Lampranthus, Malephora, Drosanthemum, Delosperma* and *Carpobrotus*), *Gazania, Arctotis, Cliffortia ferruginea* and *Aloe brevifolia*. These need to be watered at least once a week to retain their high fire-resistant quality.

Lampranthus aureus
<small>Colin Paterson-Jones</small>

- Suitable **bulbs** could include *Tulbaghia violacea, Agapanthus* and *Watsonia*. If a hedge is needed, use plants that re-sprout and do not have large quantities of dead material accumulating in the plant such as happens with proteas. The hedge (or fence) should be 30m from the house.

Agapanthus africanus
<small>Colin Paterson-Jones</small>

- Good **hedge plants** include *Searsia (Rhus) crenata, S. glauca* and *S. lucida*, all of which will re-sprout if burnt, as will *Tarchonanthus camphoratus* and *Pterocelastrus tricuspidatus*. *Osteospermum moniliferum* will burn more slowly because of its succulent-like leaves.

Tarchonanthus camphoratus
<small>Colin Paterson-Jones</small>

THE MEDIUM RESISTANCE ZONE

This should be the area between the peripheral buffer zone and the inner band (low-resistance zone) around the house.

- It is possible to plant a fynbos garden here, but remember to space **tall and short shrubs** to prevent a large dense thicket of continuous fuel developing that could support a very hot fire.

- To prevent mud slides after a fire and to ensure a speedy recovery, it is important to plant **sprouters** here. These plants have an underground ligno-tuber or rootstock that re-sprouts if burnt to the ground and could include *Leucadendron salignum, Chondropetalum tectorum, Erica spp, Maytenus oleoides, Brachylaena discolor, Salvia spp, Pelargonium cucullatum, Protea cynaroides, Felicia echinata, Olea europaea* subsp. *africana* (Wild olive), *Kiggelaria africana* (Wild peach), and *Searsia lucida*.

Protea cynaroides
<small>Andrew Brown</small>

- Some plants also have **corky bark** that will protect them if a fire is mild. These will start budding soon after a fire. They include *Leucospermum conocarpodendron, Protea nitida* (Waboom), *Mimetes cucullatus* and *Aloe plicatilis*.

Mimetes cucullatus
<small>Colin Paterson-Jones</small>

- **Forest trees** have a natural resistance to fire and do not burn easily, including *Rapanaea melanophloeos* (Cape Beach), *Brabejum stellatifolium, Cunonia capensis* (Rooiels), *Ilex mitis, Maurocenia frangularia, Halleria lucida* (Tree Fuchsia) and *Canthium mundianum*.

Watsonia aureus
<small>Colin Paterson-Jones</small>

- **Bulbs** also will re-sprout quickly after a fire and prevent mudslides by ensuring that the soil is held together. These would include *Agapanthus, Watsonia, Haemanthus coccineus, Cyrtanthus ventricosus* and *Kniphofia*.

- If you intersperse some **re-seeding plant species** amongst the mix of fynbos plants, they will ensure that the 'moon landscape' left after a fire will soon come to life. These include the many different species of *Protea, Erica, Ursinia, Leucadendron, Phylica, Helichrysum, Metalasia, Roella, Selago, Agathosma* as well as *Pelargonium cordifolium* and *Felicia aethiopica*.

THE LOW RESISTANCE ZONE AROUND THE HOUSE

This is the area closest to the house.

- This area must be kept free of large shrubs. It should contain low-growing plants and groundcovers, interspersed with gravel or lawn.

- **Groundcovers** for sunny areas include *Cliffortia ferruginea, Otholobium decumbens, Dymondia margaretae, Gazania spp., Helichrysum argyrophyllum, Hermannia saccifera, Cotula lineariloba, Agathosma ovata* (Kluitjies kraal) and vygies. For shady areas, grow *Plectranthus verticillatus, P. neochilus* (which can also grow in the sun), and *P. ciliatus* (Drege).

Carpobrotus acinaciformis
<small>Colin Paterson-Jones</small>

- **shrubs** can be planted alone with groundcovers round them. These could include *Agathosma serpyllacea, Phylica ericoides, Felicia spp., Carissa macrocarpa, Cotyledon orbiculata, Scabiosa spp.* and *Athanasia dentata*.

Drosanthemum speciosum
<small>Colin Paterson-Jones</small>

- No climbers or trellises should be attached to the walls of the house in a high-risk fire area as these act as 'ladders' for the fire.

Carissa bispinosa
<small>Lorena Pasquini</small>

IF YOU LIVE IN THE GARDEN ROUTE AREA

Indigenous species that can be planted to create a fire-proof thicket/forest **hedge** include:

- **Shrubs:** *Aloe arborescens* (Krantz Aloe), *Azima tetracantha* (Needle Bush), *Carissa bispinosa* (Num-Num), *Osteospermum moniliferum* (Bietou), *Buddleja salviifolia* (Sagewood), *Cassine tetragona* (Climbing Saffron), *Diospyros dichrophylla* (Common Star-apple), *Euclea racemosa* (Sea Guarri), *Gymnosporia buxifolia* (Common Spike-thorn), *Grewia occidentalis* (Cross-berry), *Searsia (Rhus) crenata* (Dune Crowberry), *Searsia* (*Rhus*) *lucida* (Glossy Currant).
  (Plant these closely together to create a thick hedge)

Aloe plicatilis
<small>Colin Paterson-Jones</small>

- **Trees:** *Ekebergia capensis* (Cape Ash), *Kiggelaria Africana* (Wild Peach), *Buddleja saligna* (False Olive), *Diospyros whyteana* (Bladder-nut), *Nuxia floribunda* (Forest Elder), *Pterocelastrus tricuspidatus* (Candlewood), *Sideroxylon inerme* (White Milkwood Tree), *Tarchonanthus camphoratus* (Wild Camphor Bush), *Pittosporum viridiflorum* (Cheesewood).

Sideroxylon inerme
<small>Bruce Sutherland</small>

- For the **low-resistance zone** around the house, suitable indigenous species include:
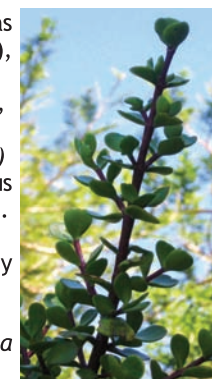
  ○ In sunny and dry, well-drained areas plant *Portulacaria afra* (Spekboom), *Aloe arborescens* (Krantz Aloe), *Osyris compressa* (Cape Sumach), *Osteospermum moniliferum* (Bietou), *Roepera (Zygophyllum) spp.* (Twinleaf) and other indigenous plants with thick or fleshy leaves.

  ○ **Groundcovers** for sunny and sandy areas include *Tetragonia decumbens, Gazania spp.* (Botterblom), *Dymondia spp., Falkia repens* (oortjies).

  ○ **Grass species** include *Cynodon dactylon* (Kaapse Kweekgras) and *Stenotaphrum secundatum* (Buffalo Grass).

Portulacaria afra
<small>Lorena Pasquini</small>

FIRESCAPING
YOUR GARDEN

<small>Kniphofia uvaria   Andrew Brown</small>