Firescaping Workshop

Focusing on: Malibu and Topanga

September 15, 2021
Go-To Webinar Housekeeping Items:

Webinar Housekeeping

Organizer: Liz Davis | Presenter: Liz Davis
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Webinar Housekeeping
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This Evening’s Speakers

- **Jenyffer Vasquez** – Facilitator
- **Mayor Grisanti**, City Of Malibu- Welcome/Opening Remarks
- **Director Scott Houston** – Introduction to West Basin
- **Douglas Kent, MS, MLA** – Class Instructor
- **Chris Brossard** – Q&A Panelist
- **Gus Meza** – Moderator
- **Matthew Veeh** – Moderator
Mission

Provide a **safe** and **reliable** supply of **high-quality water** to the communities we serve.
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Division IV
Culver City, El Segundo, Malibu, West Hollywood, and unincorporated LA County areas of Del Aire, Lennox, Marina del Rey, North Ladera Heights, Topanga, View Park, Windsor Hills and Wiseburn

Division V
Gardena, Hawthorne, Lawndale, and unincorporated LA County area of El Camino Village

www.westbasin.org
Malibu Smart & Topanga Smart Program

- Increased incentives for water efficient devices
- Provides $5 per square foot for Grass Replacement
- Program is 97% complete and available until November 30, 2021
Creating Fire-Resistant Properties and Communities
Structures

Our 1st Priority!

Whether firebrands or direct flame contact, your structure must be maintained to withstand an assault of intense heat and flying burning embers.
Structures: Hillside Living

**Problems**

- Elongated flames
- Intense heat
- Firebrands propelled by convection

**Solutions**

- Screens
- Eaves
- Trim
- Siding

Woolsey Fire. Photo by: Business Insider, 2018
Small Properties

As illustrated by the state’s deadliest and most destructive wildfires, small lot neighborhoods are particularly vulnerable to loss. The reason is because there is not enough distance between the homes to buffer the intense heat and a domino effect is created. Homes burn at about 1,110F.

Old Fire, 2003
Structures: Small Lot Design Strategies

- Shared vegetation
- Two ways off property
- Zone 1 and 2, plants only
- Non-flammable fence
- Off-street parking
Structures: To Do

- Ensure all **openings** are screened.
- Clean **roof** and gutters.
- Manage **seams** and fill gaps.

- Paint, if not sand, all peeling **paint**.
- Make your **address** visible.
Roads: Special Concern for Malibu and Topanga

Problems

- Winding roads with poor forward visibility.
- Flammable features and vegetation immediately along road.
- Roads are narrow, creating choke points.
Roads: To Do

- Make you **address** highly visible.
- Create **off-street** parking.
- Remove flammable vegetation from **5 feet** on either side of road.
- Properly maintain **features** along the road.
- Remove **dead**, dying, diseased and dried vegetation.
First Five Feet

CREATING FIRE-RESISTANT PROPERTIES AND COMMUNITIES
First Five Feet: Our 2\textsuperscript{nd} Priority

The first 5 feet of your home plays a pivotal role in its protection.

- **Avoid storage.** Compost bins, toy boxes, coat and shoe cupboards, and recycle and trash cans should be placed outside of this area.

- **Absolutely no flammable plants.** The most flammable include buckwheat, cypress, eucalyptus, juniper, and any other plant with a brittle nature and fragrance.

- **Absolutely no woody dry organic mulches.** Inorganic mulches, like river rock, are preferred. If organic mulch is needed, then use only humus, the most decomposed.

- **Avoid the use of fabrics,** which includes awnings, cushions and umbrellas.

- **Avoid erecting shading devices with the first 5 feet.** Wooden features attached to a building are a huge liability.
First Five Feet: Do you see it?

The lumber, containers and tools provide opportunities for ignition and unnecessarily add risk to an otherwise fire-hardened home.
First Five Feet: Our 2nd Priority

Malibu’s Fire-Resistant Landscaping Ordinance

- No organic mulches
- No flammable fences or hedges
- No artificial turf
First Five Feet: Shade Structures

Problems

- Attached to structures
- Poorly maintained
First Five Feet: Shade Structures

Solutions

- Detach from structure
- Slant to allow heat to escape
- Use fire-resistant wood
- Care for the wood
First 5 Feet

Malibu Firescaping Workshop
Defensible Space

CREATING FIRE-RESISTANT PROPERTIES AND COMMUNITIES
Defensible Space: Zone 1

The Garden Zone / Defensible Space

- **Distance**: Extends 30 ft from house or structure.

- **Primary Goal**: Able to withstand flying embers and intense heat. Only zone that selected plants can be dependent on imports, mainly water and fertilizers.

- **Secondary Goal**: This area must maintain a high recreational, functional and/or economical value.
Defensible Space: Pathways

*Pathways are vital for fleeing and fighting*

- Encircle a structure
- Four-feet wide and stable
- No obstructions that hinder swift travel
Defensible Space: Fencing
Defensible Space: Fencing
Privacy is Essential for Wellbeing

• Use fire-resistant materials.
• Restrict the use of wood.
• Maintain the fence with fire in mind.

Photo copied from Pinterest
Defensible Space: New Ordinance and Law

Malibu’s Fire-Resistant Landscaping Ordinance (August 1, 2020)

New landscaping guidelines apply to any landscaping project that requires an Administrative Plan Review Permit (APR) or Coastal Development Permit (CDP or ACDP).

Summary:
- Five-foot buffer around structure.
- No flammable barriers, like fences and hedges, within 5 feet.
- No flammable trees within 50 feet.
- No palm trees.
- No big or tall trees under powerlines.
- Mulches: no organics within 5 feet and no wood chips anywhere.

California AB-38: Defensible Space Inspection (July 1, 2021)

All property sold in High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones—which includes all of Malibu—must submit a defensible space inspection prior to the sale of the property.

Important Links
Cal Fire’s self-assessment at Cal Fire's Defensible Space Requirements
To request an inspection: Cal Fire's Inspection Portal.
Defensible Space: To Do

- Remove all flammable items within the first 5 feet!
- Remove dead, **dying** and diseased vegetation.
- Maintain an effective system of **paths**.
- Schedule an **appointment** with Malibu’s Fire Safety Liaison to assess your property. Email **FireSafety@malibucity.org**
Plants

CREATING FIRE-RESISTANT PROPERTIES AND COMMUNITIES
Plants: Less Flammable

Knowing Traits is More Important than Lists

- Broadleaf plants
- Moist and easily bent leaves
- Thick leaves
- Low amount of litter
- Sap that looks more like water
- Plants without fragrance
- Plants with silver or gray leaves
- Plant leaves without hair

Coral bells (*Heuchera*) and *Carex pansa* have many fire-resistant attributes.
Plants: Less Flammable

Zone 1 Plants

Zone 2 Plants
**Plants: Less Flammable**

**Zone 1 Plants**
- Agapanthus
- Cercis – Redbud
- Citrus
- Crape Myrtle
- Fescue
- Flax
- Gazania
- Grape
- Liquidambar
- Philodendron
- Photinia
- Succulents

**Zone 2 Plants**
- Artemisia ‘Silver King’
- Ceanothus
- Cistus – Rockrose
- Coast Live Oak
- Cotoneaster
- Hummingbird sage
- Lemonade Berry
- Mallow
- Native Verbena
- Toyon
- Yarrow
- Yucca
Plants: Flammable Plants

Malibu’s Fire-Resistant Landscaping Ordinance

- No palms
- No hedges or walls within 5 feet of a structure
- No flammable trees within 50 feet of a structure

Flammable Plants

- Acacia
- Cedar
- Cypress
- Eucalyptus
- Juniper
- Palms
- Pine
- Spruce
- Thuja
Plants: The Problem with Lists

- Too Old
- Diseased
- Injured
- Pest Infested
- Not Healthy

Maintenance is the Fulcrum of Fire Safety
Plants: To Do

- Remove dead, **dying** and diseased vegetation.
- **Replace** vegetation before it becomes an economic liability and fire risk.
- Do not let your plants **dry** out.
Increased Rebates

- $5 per ft² Grass Replacement
- $180 Smart timers
- High-Efficiency Sprinkler nozzles
- High-Efficiency Clothes Washers / Toilets

Be Water Efficient, Save Money and Water

Rebates: SoCalWaterSmart.com
Contacts
For more information about fire protection or water conservation programs, please contact the individuals below.

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