

PLANT SELECTION IN BUSH FIRE PRONE AREAS

While the design of the garden is important, so too is the plant species selected. No plant is fireproof, however, many plants have features that minimise the extent to which they contribute to the spread of bushfires. Given the right conditions, all plants will burn. Low to moderate fires scorch or burn plants. Severe fires cause more damage and high-intensity fires incinerate plants.

Fire Resistant Plants, which are hard to burn, have the following features:

- High moisture content
- High levels of salt
- Low volatile oil content of leaves.

The following suggestions can reduce the threat of bush fire:

- **Ensure vegetation does not provide a path for the transfer of fire to the house** - Spread the plants out so that they do not form a continuous canopy. Do not plant species directly up against buildings.
- **Avoid plants that retain or accumulate dead leaves and twigs** - These are very flammable, especially if this material is continuous from the ground to the crown. Trimmed cypress hedges, for example, are an extreme fire hazard.
- **Avoid Plants with high levels of volatile oils in leaves** - Eucalypts, Callistemons and Melaleucas burst into flames on heating and increase fire intensity. In eucalypts, the amount of volatile oil in foliage can be over 4%, whereas conifers have up to 2% and Callistemons and Melaleucas up to 1%. Generally the figure is less than 1% for Acacias, Grevilleas and Hakeas. Introduced deciduous and evergreen hardwoods have the lowest amounts with less than 0.1% of volatile oils.
- **Avoid Trees with loose, fibrous or stringy bark** - This can easily ignite and encourage fire to spread through the crown of the trees. Wind can carry burning bark, especially loose, flaky or ribbon bark, away to start new fires. Use trees that have smooth bark.
- **Clear all fine fuels, namely grass, leaves, bark and twigs** - These fuels will ignite and burn easily. Fine fuels should be cleared from around the house and the lawn should be kept well watered and short. Clear all fuels from around the base of trees. This will decrease the likelihood of damage to the tree.
- **Flammable material should be away from the house** - This includes woodpiles, wooden sheds, combustible material storage areas, large areas/quantities of garden mulch, stacked flammable building materials.



For more information about preparing your property for bush fires go to the NSW Rural Fire Service web site www.rfs.nsw.gov.au or call 1800 654 443

FIRE RESISTANT NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS INCLUDE:

Acmena smithii
Alpinia caerulea
Breynia oblongifolia
Ceratopetalum apetalum
Corymbia maculata
Cupaniopsis anacardioides
Doryphora sassafras
Elaeocarpus reticulatus
Eupomatia laurina
Ficus coronata
Glochidion ferdinandi
Myoporum acuminatum
Myoporum boninense
Myoporum insulare
Pittosporum revolutum
Pittosporum undulatum
Podocarpus elatus
Sloanea australis
Stenocarpus salignus
Synoum glandulosum
Tristaniopsis laurina

Lilly Pilly
Native Ginger
Breynia
Coachwood
Spotted Gum
Tuckeroo
Sassafras
Blueberry Ash
Native Guava, Bolwarra
Sandpaper Fig
Cheese Tree
Mangrove Boobialla
Mangrove Boobialla
Boobialla
Rough-fruited Pittosporum
Sweet Pittosporum
Plum Pine, Brown Pine
Maiden's Blush
Scrub Beefwood
Bastard or False Rosewood
Water Gum

GROUND COVER PLANTS THAT ARE HARD TO BURN INCLUDE:

Buckinghamia celssissima
Carpobrotus glaucescens
Cissus antarctica
Crinum pedunculatum
Dianella caerulea
Dichondra repens
Dioscorea transversa
Doodia aspera
Hardenbergia violacea
Pelargonium australe
Rhagodia spp.
Scaevola aemula
Scaevola calendulacea
Smilax glycyphylla
Viola hederacea

Ivory Curl
Pigface
Kangaroo Grape
Swamp Lily
Native Flax Lilly, Blue Flax Lily
Kidney Weed
Native Yam
Rasp Fern
Hardenbergia, False Sarsaparilla
Coastal Geranium
Coastal Saltbush
Fairy Fan Flower
Dune Fan-flower
Native Sarsaparilla, Sweet Tea
Native Violet