

Conservation Fuel Management Best Management Practices for Defensible Space Supports Healthy Habitats for All

Information gathered from various professional sources, including fire department officials.

Prepared by RisingLeaf Restoration Consulting, 624-9467

Work from your home out. Maintenance of clear 0-5 foot zone is critical.

Harden your home for ember resistance.

Avoid wholesale clearing of native plants. (saves money)

Avoid bare earth expanses larger than 15 square feet. Plants aid in ember and erosion control.

For protection of nesting birds, trim native plants only as needed in late fall/early winter, before February. Maintain shrub height to 2.5 feet. Remove deadwood. Create a mosaic with spaces between plants.

Preserve islands of mature native habitat, including poison oak outside of the 30' defensible space. Poison oak is valuable habitat for wildlife. Tend plants to remove ladder fuels, deadwood, and encourage fresh green growth.

Preserve diversity of native plants under oaks by thinning and pruning understory only as needed to keep plants 2.5 feet high beyond the 30' zone. **No wholesale removal.**

Prune coast live oaks in late August to October to avoid oak tree pathogens and in support of nesting birds. **Prune only branches 3" or less in diameter to achieve 6-8 foot ground clearance.**

Avoid lion tail and canopy pruning. Such cutting stresses trees and removes essential habitat and food potential for birds. Form follows function.

Preserve a 3" layer of mulch of oak tree leaves. Mulch protects roots, soil, microbes, and long term health of trees. Aids in water infiltration in ground.

When pruning and trimming and thinning, look for bird nests in trees, bushes and ground. Avoid disturbing such habitat.

Remove weeds annually in late winter and spring before they go to seed: including, but not limited to, non-native grasses, genista, non-native thistles, poison hemlock, yellow mustard, yellow star thistle.

Remove pampass grass, fountain grass, Mexican feather grass, Harding grass, jubata grass, bamboo, juniper, Italian cypress, Pride of Madera, cape ivy, English ivy, periwinkle, iceplant, St John's Wort (not a complete list)

Remove genista and other broom plants wherever you find them on your land, even if it is beyond the 100' foot defensible space.

Don't plant Eucalyptus, especially in native habitat.

Restore grasslands with native grasses and native wildflowers.

Conservation Fuel Management is a collaborative community endeavor.

**Best Times to do Fuel Management
to protect biodiversity and health of plants, animals, and habitats**

| | J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Trimming, Pruning Thinning Native Habitats | Y | | | | | | | | Y | Y | Y | Y |
| Oak Tree pruning | | | | | | | | | Y | Y | | |
| Pine Tree pruning | Y | | | | | | | | | | Y | Y |
| Madrone Pruning | Y | | | | | | | | | | | Y |
| Grass pulling/ cutting before seed set and heat | | | | Y | Y | Y | | | | | | |
| Genista removal | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | | | | | | Y | Y |
| Invasive thistle, poison hemlock, yellow mustard removal | Y | Y | Y | Y | Y | | | | | | | |

Bird Nesting Season is February through August: Birds nest in the trees, bushes and grass/ground. As grass cutting is done in Spring, please be attentive to bird nesting! Additionally, while birds tend to nest in native plants, please be attentive to their presence as you remove invasive plants.

Remove Genista by the root before it goes to seed, generally by June, depending on how hot/dry the winter/spring has been. Use a Weed Wrench. Available to purchase online or can be borrowed through Carmel Valley Association.

Remove invasive thistles, poison hemlock, yellow mustard before they set seed, generally by end of May depending on the heat of Spring.

No wholesale brush removal, especially on steep slopes. Thin, Trim, Prune instead.

Shaded fuel break: maintain islands of understory plants no higher than 2.5 feet high. No wholesale removal of understory plants.

Please visit RTGA website <https://rtgfiresafetycommittee.org/> to view important photographs of properly completed mitigation work.

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Website resources

<http://cal-sisters.com/resources/> Before and after fuel maintenance drawings for different habitat types and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_YUYqymM-Os **Excellent in-depth recommendations**

<https://firesafemarin.org/create-a-fire-smart-yard/>

<https://firesafemarin.org/articles/videos/the-compatibility-of-fire-prevention-and-protection-of-biodiversity/>

<https://ebcnps.org/news/fire-resilient-landscaping-with-native-plants-2021-09/>

<https://www.cnps.org/flora-magazine/fire-resistant-landscaping-23654>

From the FireSafe Council/Monterey County
Community Wildfire Protection Plan, November 2010 v2,
Updated 6-3-2019

6.3.6 Exotic/Invasive Plant Removal

Removal of non-native and invasive plants from the WUI will help reduce the presence of undesirable species and enhance thinning efforts aimed at reducing overall biomass levels. Typical undesirable exotic species may include, but are not limited to:

Palm trees (various species)

Eucalyptus trees (Eucalyptus spp.)

Pepper trees (Schinus spp.)

Fennel (Foeniculum vulgare)

Mustard (Brassica spp.)

French broom (*Genista monspessulana*)

Poison hemlock (Conium maculatum)

Thistle (various species: Italian, Bull, Yellow star, Milk, Russian)

Harding grass (Phalaris aquatica)

Jubata grass (Cortaderia jubata) similar to Pampas grass

Pampas grass (Cortaderia selbana)

Cape ivy (Delonix odorata)

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