

Fire Hazardous Plant List

Fire prevention is of the utmost importance in Lamorinda. The rich vegetation and hot, dry summers can create an environment that is highly susceptible to wildfire. Refraining from planting highly flammable vegetation is critical in helping to reduce the speed at which wildfires can travel and spread.


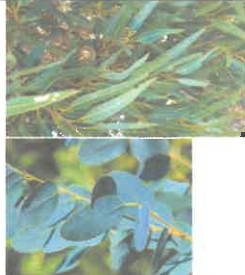


















The California Fire Code and the California State Fire Marshal have authority over all properties within the state. On and after July 1, 2021, when you sell property that is located in a high or very high fire hazard severity zone, you'll need documentation of a compliant Defensible Space Inspection within 6 months of the sales contract date. In some areas, homes may not be sold if these species are on the property. In many areas, these plants may not be planted.

The following plant species are prohibited in some jurisdictions and discouraged in others. The reasons for listing the plants are generally because they are resinous and/or have new, green growth that covers older, dead leaves, needles or branches. These factors, among others, make the plant a fire hazard. Some emit poisonous vapors when burning. Different agencies have different lists and a few of these species are on some allowable plant lists. It is all up to the local Fire District and Inspector.

The photos below are examples of the species. Most plant genera have many taxa (species, sub-species and varieties). For example, *Abies*, the Fir genus, has about 66 species. Use the photos as a guide to the type of plant and then, if you want more specific information, search the web for "xxx species identification".























TREES		Abies Species – Fir Trees – and <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> , Douglas Fir (CA native) – Remove within 100' of structures and 15' of roadways. Limb up to 10'. Provide canopy separation so no limbs touch other nearby trees.
		Acacia Species - they contain oils that are flammable. They also contain resin which is highly flammable especially when dry.
		Adenostoma Sparsifolium - Red Shanks - explosive high oil content
		Chamaecyparis Species - False Cypress - Except Dwarf - high oil content
		Cryptomaria Japonica – Japanese Cedar - Except Dwarf - high oil content
		Cupressus Species-Cypress - Many of these trees are flammable. Some are very highly flammable, including the Leyland, Arizona and Italian Cypress. Remove cypress trees within 100' of structures and 15' of roadways or driveways. Limb up to 10' or 1/3 height of tree is less than 30' tall.

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TREES			Eucalyptus Species – non-native – consider removing within 100’ of structures and 15’ of roadways. Remove all limbs within 10’ of ground. Remove all dead wood, peeling bark and undergrowth regularly.
			Metasequoia-Dawn Redwood – low fire tolerance
			Palms- All – if fronds are dry they can detach and spread flames. Embers can embed in the fibrous tissue or trunk and ignite the tree.
			Picea Species-Spruce – Limb up 10’ or 1/3 height is less than 30’. Remove all dead wood, dead needles, and twiggy growth regularly.
			Pinus Species-All Pines Except Dwarf Mugo - Needles are highly flammable. And, their resin is very flammable as well. Limb up to 10’ or 1/3 of tree height. Provide canopy separation. Remove all ladder fuels. Remove dead wood.
			Schinus Species-Pepper Trees – These invasive trees have a high oil content
			Taxodium Species – Bald Cypress – rare, non-native. Easily injured by fire
			Taxus Species - Except Dwarf – Yew - Pacific yew has thin bark and is sensitive to heat damage. Plants are generally killed by even light ground fires.
			Thuja Species – Arborvitae – Thuja are an extremely fire prone species, and should not be planted in the defensible space zone or near roadways or driveways.
			Tsuga Species-Hemlock – Conifer in the Pine family – fire prone, remove if within 100’ of structures or 15’ of roadways. Limb up 10’.










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SHRUBS / BRUSH

		Adenostoma Fasciculatum – Chamis – CA native, should be removed within 30' of structures. Maintain completely free of dead twigs and leaves. Part of the chaparral that grows quickly after fires.
		Artemisia californica – Coastal Sagebrush – CA native California sagebrush has a high ratio of dead:live material, making it highly flammable and a 15.6% level of ether extracts, characterizing it as "explosively flammable".
		Baccharis Species – Coyote Brush – after 2-5 years, most Coyote Brush builds up an increasing amount of dead, woody material that may be highly combustible. Remove within 30' of structures.
		Bambusoideae – Bamboo – Bamboo should be removed within 30' of structures or 10' of roads and driveways. The tight masses of stems tend to accumulate lots of dead materials.
		Cytisus, Gentista, Spartum-Brooms – invasive non-native is highly flammable
		Eriogonum-Buckwheat – CA native - highly flammable
		Cupressocyparis - highly flammable
		Dodonaea Viscosa - Hopseed Bush – highly flammable - rapid ignition of dried leaves
		Junipersus Species- Juniper – also known as “Gasoline Bush”, one of the most fire prone species. Should be removed within 100' of structures and 10' of roadways and driveways. Should be thinned into individual bushes.
		Nerium oleander – While Oleander is not fire hazardous if kept well groomed, it is poisonous and when burned, the smoke is poisonous.
		Pickeringia montana – Chaparral pea – CA native – high fire hazard shrub
		Salvia mellifera – Black Sage – CA native – volatile material. Prostrate varieties present less fire danger and are better choice for honey production.

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SHRUBS			Salvia rosmarinus – Rosemary – The oils are highly flammable – plants for cooking should be kept well trimmed. Bush form should be removed within 30’ of structure.
			Tamarix Species – SaltCedar - non-native. Tamarisk plants can have many stems and high rates of stem mortality, resulting in a dense accumulation of dead, dry branches, enhancing the crowns' flammability

GRASSES			Cortaderia Selloana - Pampas Grass – fire prone. Should be removed in the defensible space zone. No maintenance routine significantly reduces fire hazard.
			Miscanthus Species-Grasses Grass – fire prone. Should be removed in the defensible space zone. No maintenance routine significantly reduces fire hazard.
	 		Muehlenbergia Species-Deer Grasses Grass – fire prone. Should be removed in the defensible space zone. No maintenance routine significantly reduces fire hazard.
			Pennisetum Setaceum-Fountain Grasses – popular draught-tolerant grass that is fire prone and should not be in a defensible space zone.

Vegetation Management for Fire and Public Safety

Trimming your vegetation is a continual process that not only makes your property more attractive, but it makes your property compliant with the laws and regulations that are in place to keep the community safe from fire and traffic hazards. Below are guidelines that are a compilation of local, fire district, county, state, and federal laws and regulations. While a particular guideline may not be law in your area, they are all excellent guidelines to keep your property safe.

1. Intersection “triangle” sight distance – all vegetation at an intersection shall be maintained at a height of no more than 3 feet or trees lower than 9 feet for a distance of 25 feet from the intersecting roadway. This allows drivers to see traffic on cross streets.
2. Vegetation removal – all dead and dying trees, bushes and other vegetation must be removed to prevent fire spread.
3. Trees and other overhead vegetation must be trimmed to allow 15 feet of vertical clearance over roadways and 3’ back from edge of pavement.
4. Signs should be visible to drivers at all times. Control signs such as STOP, YIELD, SLOW, etc. should have clear sightlines of 250 feet in residential neighborhoods. Noncritical signs (bus stop, parking restrictions, street names, etc.) need sightlines of 150 feet. Cut or trim trees, brush, weeds or grass to clear a driver’s line of sight to the sign or traffic control device.

