

Your Lawn

A well maintained lawn can serve as an effective firebreak as part of your FireSmart landscape. Lawns can also add to the enjoyment of your yard, to property values, and help cool your home in the summer, reducing energy for air-conditioners. However, most lawns are much larger than required and consume high amounts of water in comparison to most other plantings.

Take a look at your lawn and ask yourself these questions:

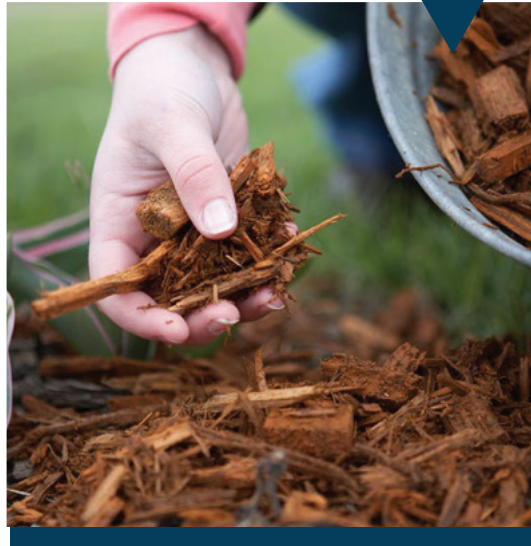
1. How much of my lawn is actually walked or played on?
2. Is it there because I don't know what else to do with that area?
3. Are there areas that are difficult or dangerous to mow?
4. Could sections of the lawn be replaced by groundcovers, shrubs or ornamental grasses that need less water and maintenance?
5. Are there areas where hard surfaces like walkways or decks would make the living space more practical?

Caution: Bark Mulch and Pine Needle Mulch

Bark mulch, pine needle mulches and other plant-based mulches offer many benefits to gardens. However, these mulches are susceptible to ignition from wildfire embers or cigarettes, increasing the fire threat to your home. When landscaping against your home, consider using gravel mulch, rock mulch, or a combination of plant mulch and decorative rock mulch to reduce the risk.

Fire-resistant does not mean fireproof!

Even fire-resistant plants will burn if not well maintained. Be sure to keep all of your landscape plants healthy with appropriate watering, proper pruning, etc.



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Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Guide to FireSmart LANDSCAPING

Homeowners building and living near treed areas must take special precautions to protect their lives and property.

In addition to the actual building design and construction material used to construct your home, the type of plant material and the design of the landscape immediately adjacent to your home is a critical factor in determining the likelihood of your home surviving a wildfire. It is important to select fire resistant plant material and to design your landscaping to reduce the risk, while maintaining a functional yard appropriate to your region.

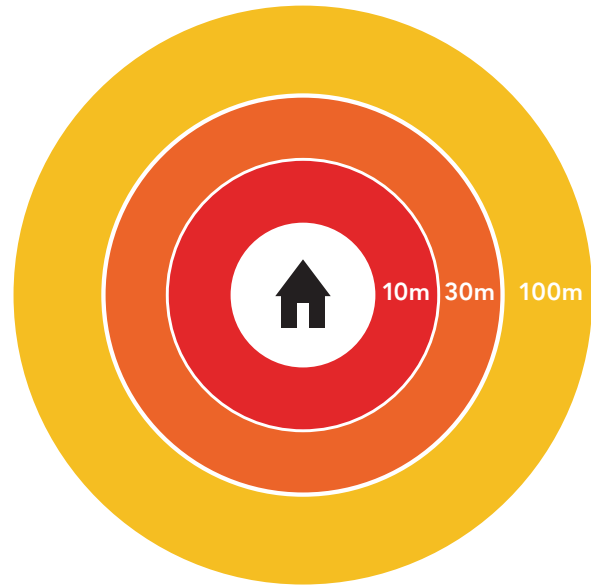


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FireSmart Priority Zones

The FireSmart program identifies 3 priority zones that must be managed to reduce the wildfire threat to your home. Priority Zones 1 and 2 are the most critical– this is known as the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ). Homeowners, builders and landscapers should focus on reducing the risks in the HIZ.



What are Fire Resistant Plants?

Fire resistant plants are those that do not readily ignite from flame or other ignition sources. These plants can be damaged or even killed by fire; however, their foliage and stems do not significantly contribute to the fuel and fire intensity.

Characteristics of fire-resistant plants:

- Moist, supple leaves
- Little dead wood and tendency not to accumulate dead material
- Water-like sap with little or no odour
- Low amount of sap or resin material



Plants to Avoid

Scientific Name	Common Name
Cortaderia selloana	Pampas Grass
Genista sp.	Broom
Ilex spp.	Holly
Juniperus spp.	Juniper
Pennisetum spp.	Fountain Grass
Picea pungens	Colorado Spruce
Pinus sp.	Pine
Taxus spp.	Yew
Thuja spp.	Cedar, Arborvitae

Suggested Plants

Scientific Name	Common Name
Betula spp.	Birch
Crataegus spp.	Hawthorn
Fraxinus pennsylvanica	Green Ash
Acer ginnala	Amur Maple
Quercus macrocarpa	Bur Oak
Cornus sericea	Red-twig Dogwood, Redosier Dogwood
Physocarpus opulifolius	Ninebark
Salix spp.	Willow e.g. Blue Fox
Syringa vulgaris	Common Lilac



Characteristics of highly flammable plants:

- Contain fine, dry, dead material within the plant
- Plant stem, branches and leaves contain volatile waxes, terpenes or oils
- Leaves are aromatic
- Gummy, resinous sap with a strong odour
- Loose papery bark

**Avoid landscaping with highly flammable plants around your home.*

This is not an exhaustive list of plants that are both fire resistant and hardy enough to survive in our northern climate.

For a more complete guide, visit the FireSmart Canada website firesmartcanada.ca and check out the Resources Library. There, you can download the FireSmart Guide to Landscaping which has a complete list of suggested fire resistant plants.

Keep in mind that Wood Buffalo is a northern community. With that in mind, it's best to plant trees and shrubs of Hardiness Zone 2. Use caution with plants from Zone 3 as some may not survive our short growing season.

As well, it is recommended that homeowners do not plant anything in the Prunus species, due to their susceptibility to Black Knot disease. Find out more about Black Knot disease at rmwb.ca/blackknot.

Remember, you can only plant trees, shrubs, grasses and plants on your own property. You cannot plant anything on adjacent Municipal property or private land.

Learn more at rmwb.ca/firesmart

Plan your Landscape for Water Use

There are many beautiful trees, shrubs and flowers with low water requirements that are also FireSmart (see the FireSmart plant list). If you choose FireSmart plants with higher water requirements, group them together so you can water your yard more efficiently.