

Fire Retardant Plants for Canberra

Bushfires are a common occurrence in summer for most Australians, and protecting your family, pets and property does not have to be difficult if you plan ahead. Here are some tips for establishing a fire retardant garden.

REMEMBER - fire retardant plants are only one aspect of preparing your property to withstand fire. Seek information on house design, water use and personal fire plans from your local authorities.

Having a garden containing fire retardant plants will not necessarily stop a fire from damaging your house, but may help slow the fire and reduce radiant heat.

Maintenance can make a difference

- remove lower branches from trees
- remove dry or dead material from around the plants
- prune shrubs to keep foliage fresh and green
- replace lawns and grass areas around buildings with succulent groundcovers, such as *Myoporum parvifolium*
- cut back Australian grass tufts and water regularly for a flush of green growth

Plant choices

- Smooth-barked trees will not burn as readily as stringy or rough-barked trees
- Plants with a high moisture or salt content, or with a low oil content, will take a much greater time to ignite and will burn slowly.
- A well watered hedge on the fire-prone side of the house can reduce radiant heat and the spread of fire to the house
- Inorganic mulches, such as granite or gravel on the fire-prone side of the house will help slow the spread of fire.

Look for the following features when choosing plants

- broad or fleshy leaves
- smooth bark
- high moisture content in leaves
- low oil content (hold a leaf up to the sun and look through it – you can sometimes see little spotty oil glands)



GROUNDCOVERS

Ajuga species
Blechnum Penna Marina
Bulbine bulbosa
Microlaena stipoides
Myoporum parvifolium
Scleranthus biflorus
Selliera radicans
Viola hederacea

SMALL PLANTS (to 1.5m)

Agapanthus species
Anigozanthus species
Atriplex nummularia
Correa alba
Correa reflexa
Crocea saligna
Dianella tasmanica
Hebe species
Myoporum viscosum
Pelargonium species
Rhagodia spinescens
Thelionema grande

SHRUBS

Acacia cultriformis
Acacia iteaphylla
Acacia pravissima
Acacia vestita
Banksia marginata
Bursaria lasiophylla
Camellia cultivars
Davesia mimosoides
Escallonia species
Grevillea aquifolium
Grevillea shiressii
Grevillea victoriae
Hakea salicifolia
Hydrangea species
Laurus nobilis
Solanum linearifolium

TREES

Acacia melanoxylon
Acacia howittii
Allocasuarina verticillata
Brachychiton populneus
Casuarina cunninghamiana
Cercis siliquastrum
Laurus nobilis
Magnolia grandiflora
Melia azedarach var. australasica
Syringia vulgaris



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PLEASE NOTE – these plant lists are a small example of plants that are suitable for a fire retardant garden. Contact your local council or government authority for more information.

Go to www.montrosecfa.com.au/garden to see a fabulous fire retardant garden!



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