

Forestry Notes



Defensible Space Check List

**Can You Defend Your Home from Wildfire?
Do you live in a Firewise home?**

Living with Wildfire

Forty-two % of New Jersey is forested. Many people live in the area where structures meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland. This is the Wildland–Urban Interface (WUI). Here it is critical that people and homes Firewise practices and defensible space are used to help protect life and property from wildfire Firewise

What is Defensible Space?

Defensible Space is the area around your home or structures that can be managed to help protect them from damage by a wildfire. Defensible spaces are usually defined as three zones of increasing distances from the home or structure where zone-specific management practices are established. Ideally here are three Defensible Zones designated around a *Firewise* home and structures where the homeowner manages the vegetation to reduce the wild-fire risk.

The zones are:

Zone One - 0 to 30 feet around the home or structure.

Zone Two- 30 to 75 feet

Zone Three- 75 to 100 feet

What is a Firewise home?

A Firewise home or community in the WUI of New Jersey is one that is well defended not only by Defensible Space Zones but also is built or improved by use of Class A fire rated building materials. Such materials used with proper underlayment include roofing materials of metal, clay tile, slate and fiber cement shingles; siding of cement fiber material; soffits of non flammable material and decks that are enclosed to prevent hot embers from blowing under them. These, and keeping property free of flammable materials, are a few of the many *Firewise* practices that can be used to help protect property and loved-ones from wildfires.

Desired Defense Practices

- No branches overhang structures.
- Gutters are kept clean of leaves.
- Dead leaves and wood are promptly removed.
- Roofing material is non-flammable.
- Siding materials are non-flammable.
- A shovel, rake and a hose attached to a reliable water source are available.
- ♦ **Within 30 feet of structures:**
- No tall trees or plants grow here, especially resinous evergreens.
- No flammable mulches are used.
- No propane tanks or woodpiles are stored here.
- ♦ **Within 100 feet of structures:**
- Tree canopies do not touch each other.
- Grasses are kept mowed and irrigated.
- Ladder fuels are removed.



A well defended home in the NJ pine barrens

Improve and Maintain Your Defense

- Routinely remove branches that grow to overhang structures.
- Use safe ladders and water power to clean gutters.
- Rake and remove leaves and deadwood throughout the seasons.
- Replace existing roofing with metal and underlayment or other Class A rated fire resistant roofing.
- Keep a shovel, rake and hoses protected from sun damage under an accessible, visible, shelter.

◆ Within 30 feet of structures:

- Remove tall trees. Plant non-resinous low plants shrubs more than 3 feet away from foundations.
- Use stone mulches within 3 feet of foundations.
- Store propane tanks and wood piles at least 30 feet from structures.

◆ Within 100 feet of structures

- Routinely prune branches so tree canopies are 10 feet or more apart.
- Keep grasses mowed to 6 inches or less.
- Irrigate lawns and grasses.
- Remove branches (ladder fuels) up to 8 feet above the ground.



Warren Grove Fire in 2007 claimed 15,360 acres and 3 homes

New or Improvement Construction

- Construct roofing with non-flammable Class A fire resistant material such as metal, clay tile, fiber-cement or slate shingles.
- Use non-flammable siding such as cement based siding.
- Install self-cleaning gutters.
- Use non-flammable mulch such as gravel or stones within 30 feet of structures.
- Construct roofs with a minimum overhangs and fire-resistant soffits.
- Provide barriers so burning embers cannot enter vents or under decks.
- Remove all tall trees, especially resinous evergreens, within 30 feet of structures.
- Prune all trees to minimize fire jumping from one-tree-to-another or up-from-ground fires-to-branches.



This *Firewise* home with defensible zones survived a wildfire

Remember:

All vegetation is flammable