

00:00:11:01 - 00:00:12:24

Hi, I'm Alicia Mason.

00:00:12:24 - 00:00:16:07

Welcome back to "Seven Saturdays
to a Fire Resistant Home."

00:00:16:07 - 00:00:17:26

Each week we're talking about ways

00:00:17:26 - 00:00:20:06

to make your home safer from wildfires.

00:00:20:06 - 00:00:22:06

In previous episodes,
we've covered creating

00:00:22:06 - 00:00:25:07

a defensible space, making
your home fire safe,

00:00:25:07 - 00:00:26:23

and preparing for an evacuation

00:00:26:23 - 00:00:28:15

in the event of an emergency.

00:00:28:15 - 00:00:30:00

Today, we're gonna show you

00:00:30:00 - 00:00:33:04

how to be a smart gardener by
making your property beautiful

00:00:33:04 - 00:00:35:27

and more fire resistant at the same time.

00:00:35:27 - 00:00:39:09

First, we'll learn about
types of plants and trees

00:00:39:09 - 00:00:41:11

you should think about
having around your home.

00:00:41:11 - 00:00:43:20

Then we'll talk about
ways to position plants

00:00:43:20 - 00:00:47:02

around your home to better
prevent them from catching fire.

00:00:47:02 - 00:00:49:06

And finally, we'll talk
about tree placement

00:00:49:06 - 00:00:50:21

when creating defensible space

00:00:50:21 - 00:00:52:00

around your property.

00:00:52:00 - 00:00:54:04

To help out, I'd like to
welcome back our expert,

00:00:54:04 - 00:00:57:28

David Hawks, former fire chief
of the CAL FIRE Butte Unit

00:00:57:28 - 00:01:00:08

and senior public safety
specialists at PG&E.

00:01:01:05 - 00:01:02:18

Thanks for having me back, Alicia.

00:01:02:18 - 00:01:05:10

Gardening is a popular hobby
here in beautiful California.

00:01:05:10 - 00:01:07:12

To make your home more fire resistant,

00:01:07:12 - 00:01:09:14

plant selection and placement are key.

00:01:09:14 - 00:01:11:17

Today I'm gonna show you some simple steps

00:01:11:17 - 00:01:13:19

to keep garden plants and
trees on your property

00:01:13:19 - 00:01:15:23

from becoming fuel for a fire.

00:01:15:23 - 00:01:17:21

While no plant is fireproof,

00:01:17:21 - 00:01:19:15

I'll give you tips on which native plants

00:01:19:15 - 00:01:22:07

have adapted to become more
fire resistant than others.

00:01:22:07 - 00:01:24:15

Okay, wow, now I'm interested.

00:01:24:15 - 00:01:27:12

So David, you mentioned
that certain plants

00:01:27:12 - 00:01:30:05

and trees have evolved to
be more fire resilient.

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Absolutely.

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Over centuries, native
plants in fire-prone areas

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like California have adapted
to protect themselves.

00:01:36:12 - 00:01:37:10

That's so cool.

00:01:37:10 - 00:01:40:09

I had no idea that we have
plants native to this region

00:01:40:09 - 00:01:42:01

that are actually fire resistant.

00:01:45:08 - 00:01:47:28

David, can you touch
on what types of plants

00:01:47:28 - 00:01:49:03

are fire resistant?

00:01:49:03 - 00:01:51:16

Yes, it's best to check
with your local nursery.

00:01:51:16 - 00:01:53:04

Any plant is capable of burning.

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However, some plants like these here,

00:01:55:10 - 00:01:56:26

that are non-woody herbaceous,

00:01:56:26 - 00:01:58:26

are more resistive to fire than others.

00:01:58:26 - 00:02:00:19

And for trees, it's best to select a tree

00:02:00:19 - 00:02:02:26

that is deep rooted, has thicker bark,

00:02:02:26 - 00:02:06:00

and typically a tree
with leaves over needles.

00:02:06:00 - 00:02:07:00

Perfect. Okay.

00:02:07:00 - 00:02:08:28

And I'd love to talk
about plant placement.

00:02:08:28 - 00:02:10:03

I know that's important too.

00:02:10:03 - 00:02:10:28

It is.

00:02:14:00 - 00:02:15:28

Wow, these plants are a big problem.

00:02:15:28 - 00:02:18:05

They pose a big risk to this house.

00:02:18:05 - 00:02:21:02

Not only are they in the wrong
spot, up close to the house,

00:02:21:02 - 00:02:22:05

but these are woody plants.

00:02:22:05 - 00:02:23:29

They should never be
planted close to the house.

00:02:23:29 - 00:02:26:26

They should be planted well
out into the landscaped area

00:02:26:26 - 00:02:27:21

of the yard.

00:02:27:21 - 00:02:29:23

No plant should ever be
planted within five feet

00:02:29:23 - 00:02:30:22

of the home.

00:02:30:22 - 00:02:33:05

Plants that are within
from five to 30 feet

00:02:33:05 - 00:02:35:26

should be low growing
and non-woody plants.

00:02:35:26 - 00:02:39:06

These plants should be planted
outside of that 30 foot zone.

00:02:39:06 - 00:02:41:10

The other problem with these
plants is they have a lot

00:02:41:10 - 00:02:44:01

of dry dead material,
it is super receptive

00:02:44:01 - 00:02:45:21

to embers in a firestorm.

00:02:45:21 - 00:02:47:21

Let's pick these up and move
them well away from the house.

00:02:47:21 - 00:02:49:06

Sounds good.

00:02:49:06 - 00:02:52:18

David, tell us a little bit
about this plant placement here.

00:02:52:18 - 00:02:53:12

Good question.

00:02:53:12 - 00:02:55:22

These two plants are
definitely too close together

00:02:55:22 - 00:02:58:27

and not only that, they're
immature plants or young plants.

00:02:58:27 - 00:03:00:23

We need to consider what the plant size

00:03:00:23 - 00:03:01:21
is gonna be at maturity

00:03:01:21 - 00:03:03:07
and these plants are
gonna probably get six

00:03:03:07 - 00:03:05:02
to eight feet tall, if not taller.

00:03:05:02 - 00:03:08:08
So, what we need to do is
create two times the space

00:03:08:08 - 00:03:09:29
of that heighth when we're planting them.

00:03:09:29 - 00:03:10:24
So, we should be looking

00:03:10:24 - 00:03:13:15
at 10 to 12 feet separation, at least.

00:03:13:15 - 00:03:16:28
It's also good to create
pathways through your garden

00:03:16:28 - 00:03:19:10
with rock and other types
of non-combustible material

00:03:19:10 - 00:03:21:09
that will help break up fuel continuity.

00:03:21:09 - 00:03:25:03
Okay. And this plant over
here looks a little sad.

00:03:25:03 - 00:03:26:02
Is that correct?

00:03:26:02 - 00:03:27:25
Boy, this guy has seen better days.

00:03:27:25 - 00:03:29:11

Yeah.

00:03:29:11 - 00:03:30:18

The best thing that you can do

00:03:30:18 - 00:03:33:20

is keep your plants well
irrigated and watered

00:03:33:20 - 00:03:36:26

so that they're healthy and
have high moisture content

00:03:36:26 - 00:03:37:29

in the plant.

00:03:37:29 - 00:03:40:18

But in the case of this guy,
since he's on his last leg,

00:03:40:18 - 00:03:42:01

we need to remove him altogether.

00:03:42:01 - 00:03:43:20

Okay, so a more beautiful garden

00:03:43:20 - 00:03:45:07

is actually a safer garden, David.

00:03:45:07 - 00:03:46:21

Absolutely.

Sounds good.

00:03:49:25 - 00:03:51:11

Okay, David, so we touched on plants.

00:03:51:11 - 00:03:53:07

Can you tell us a little
bit more about trees?

00:03:53:07 - 00:03:55:00

Absolutely. You need to

think about what the tree

00:03:55:00 - 00:03:56:11
is gonna look like at maturity.

00:03:56:11 - 00:03:58:05
Conifers and taller
trees should be planted

00:03:58:05 - 00:04:00:05
at least 30 feet away from the home,

00:04:00:05 - 00:04:02:21
smaller trees and trees
with leaves like a Dogwood,

00:04:02:21 - 00:04:04:11
maybe planted a little bit closer.

00:04:04:11 - 00:04:05:16
The other thing you need to think about

00:04:05:16 - 00:04:07:00
is when the trees reach maturity,

00:04:07:00 - 00:04:08:11
what other trees in the area

00:04:08:11 - 00:04:10:04
will be close proximity to them?

00:04:10:04 - 00:04:11:03
You need to make sure that you have

00:04:11:03 - 00:04:13:23
at least 10 foot of spacing
between the crowns of trees

00:04:13:23 - 00:04:14:28
once they reach maturity.

00:04:14:28 - 00:04:16:21
That's a great point.

00:04:16:21 - 00:04:18:09

Is there anything else
I should keep in mind

00:04:18:09 - 00:04:19:28

when planting on my property?

00:04:19:28 - 00:04:22:00

Yes, you need to be aware
of that fire spreads faster

00:04:22:00 - 00:04:22:28

on sloped surfaces.

00:04:22:28 - 00:04:24:04

If your property is sloped,

00:04:24:04 - 00:04:26:23

choose plants that are lower
in height and lower in volume

00:04:26:23 - 00:04:29:07

and make sure to give them
plenty of space from each other,

00:04:29:07 - 00:04:30:23

at least double the amount of space

00:04:30:23 - 00:04:32:24

that you would give them on flat ground.

00:04:32:24 - 00:04:34:10

Alicia, that's an excellent example

00:04:34:10 - 00:04:35:18

of a fire resistance plant.

00:04:35:18 - 00:04:36:25

Yeah, it's beautiful.

00:04:36:25 - 00:04:38:11

I love that it's an activity

00:04:38:11 - 00:04:39:27

I can do with my whole family

00:04:39:27 - 00:04:42:24

and it's making my home
more fire resilient.

00:04:42:24 - 00:04:44:23

Remember that additional
landscaping projects

00:04:44:23 - 00:04:46:28

like building stone
walls, gravel walkways,

00:04:46:28 - 00:04:48:24

and patios also increase the amount

00:04:48:24 - 00:04:51:13

of defensible space
immediately around your home.

00:04:51:13 - 00:04:52:20

That all sounds great.

00:04:52:20 - 00:04:54:14

What's in store for next week?

00:04:54:14 - 00:04:55:24

We're going to look at simple ways

00:04:55:24 - 00:04:58:19

to make the inside of your
home more fire resilient.

00:04:58:19 - 00:05:00:10

Okay. Well, I'm definitely interested

00:05:00:10 - 00:05:01:19

in learning more about that.

00:05:01:19 - 00:05:02:26

Thanks again for joining us on

00:05:02:26 - 00:05:05:14

"Seven Saturdays to a
More Fire Resistant Home."

00:05:05:14 - 00:05:06:23
We'll see you next week.

00:05:06:23 - 00:05:07:18
If you wanna catch up

00:05:07:18 - 00:05:10:06
on our previous "Seven Saturdays
to a Fire Resistant Home,"

00:05:10:06 - 00:05:13:15
go to safetyactioncenter.pge.com

00:05:13:15 - 00:05:16:09
to watch past episodes and
learn more preparedness tips.