

National Wildfire Prevention Day Workshop

Sponsored by the Oakland Firesafe Council, the Piedmont
Pines Neighborhood Association and the Montclair
Neighborhood Council

May 4, 2019



Defensible Space

Carol Rice, Wildland Fire Manager / Fire Ecologist

Defensible Space

Is Your Yard Truly Defensible?

What Is Defensible Space?

**FUEL
REDUCTION**

Space in which to mount an offense

Space in which fuel ladders are removed

Space without horizontal fuel continuity

Space without vertical fuel continuity

Space without danger at your back

**WHAT
are we defending
AGAINST?**

HEAT

Flames

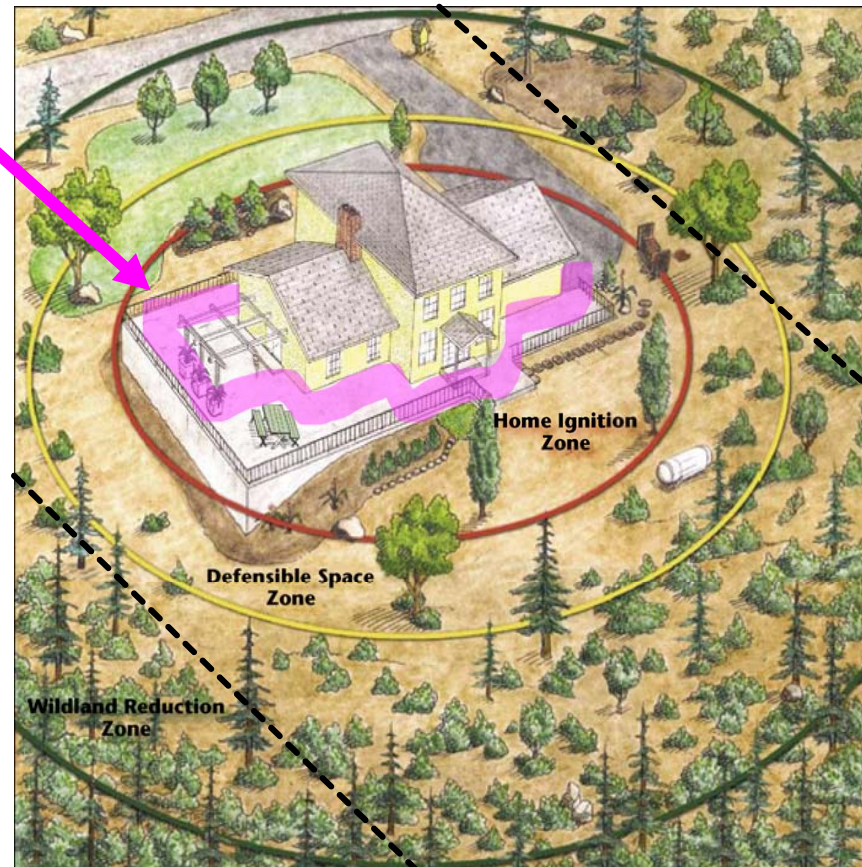
Radiant Heat

Embers

What is the non-ignition zone

Zones of reduced fuel outwards from home

- 0-5' is most restricted home ignition zone
- 5-30' zone defensible space
- 30'-100' sometimes required, always a good idea
- Treat entire lot
- Work from the house out, and bottom up



The Non-Ignition Zone: The First Five

- Place where embers can land
 - Fuels closest to homes increase chance of ignition and potential damage
- REALLY important to structure ignition prevention
 - Limit vegetation to minimize potential heat output adjacent to structure



Not part of code. Yet.

Bad example of non-ignition zone

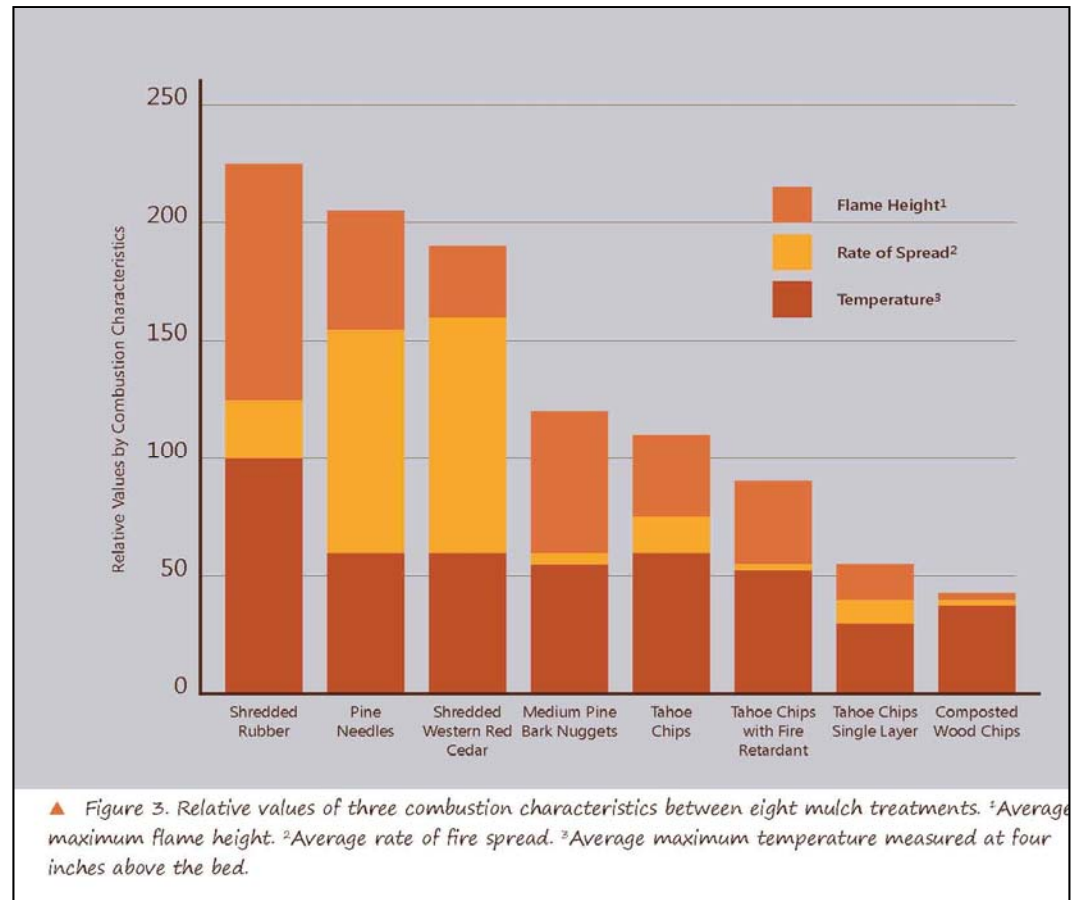
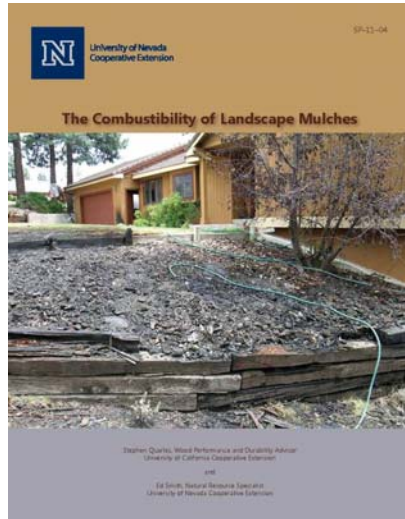
- Work from the house out and bottom up.



Good example of clear space around vents



Much about Mulch



The Combustibility of Landscape Mulches. University of Nevada Cooperative Extension. 2011

Defensible Space Requirements: Remove vines, mow grass

Remove vines from
trees, structure

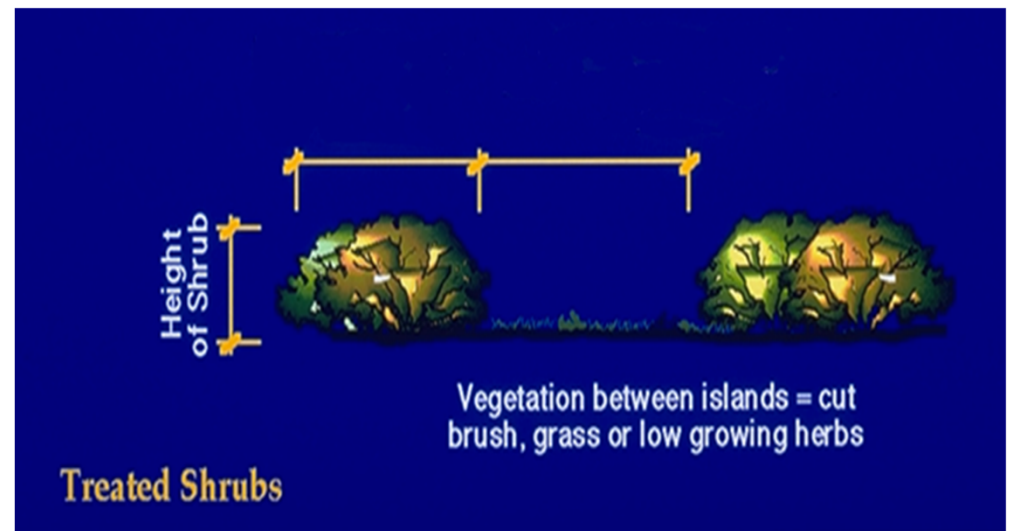
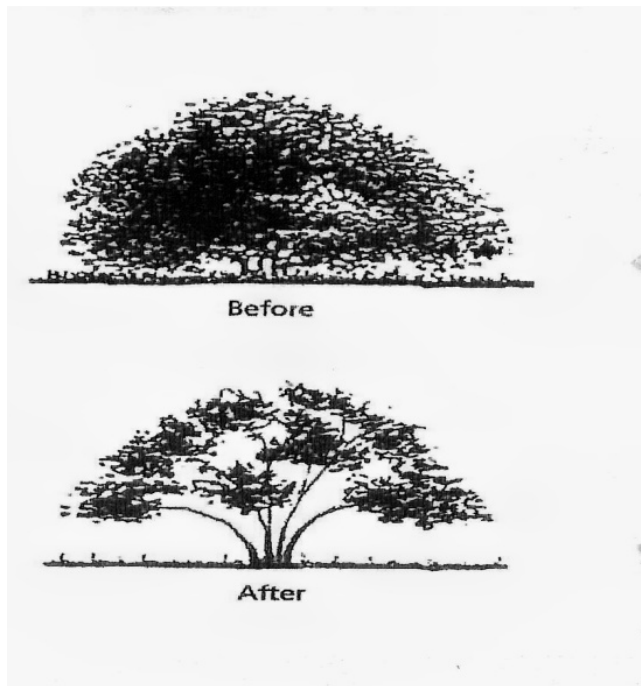


Mow grass to 6 inch
height (grazing OK)



Defensible Space Requirements: Separate shrubs, reduce volume

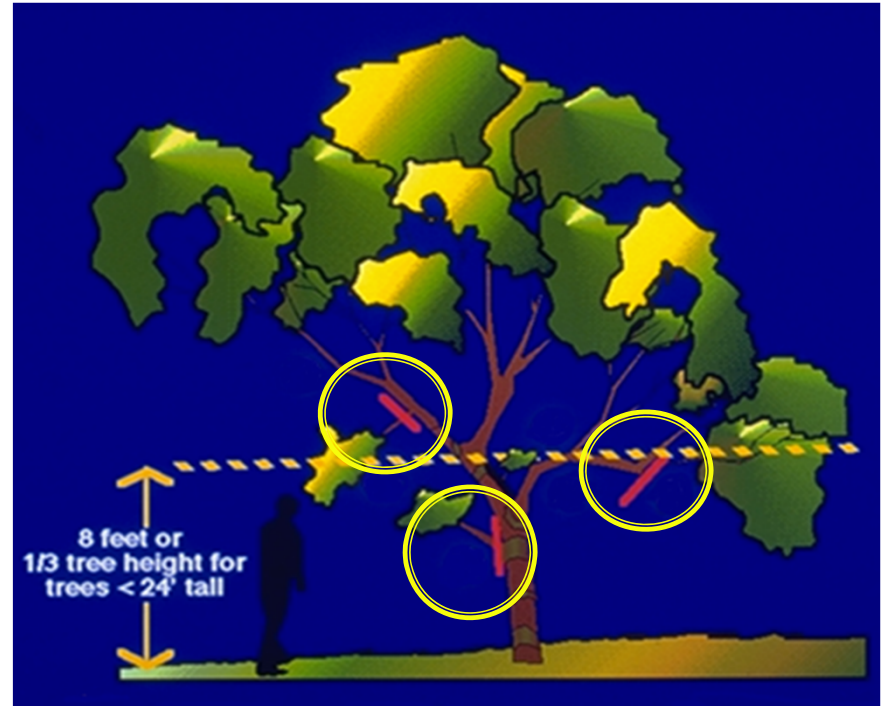
- Create groupings of shrubs
- Separate branches within the shrubs
- Only ground cover under trees
- Remove dead material - EVERYWHERE



Shrub thinning and spacing

Defensible Space Requirements: Prune trees

- Prune only branches smaller than 3 inches in diameter
- Prune small branches to 6-ft above ground
- Special specifications for larger branches
- Remove dead material – EVERYWHERE
- Prune branches 10-ft from house (in all directions)



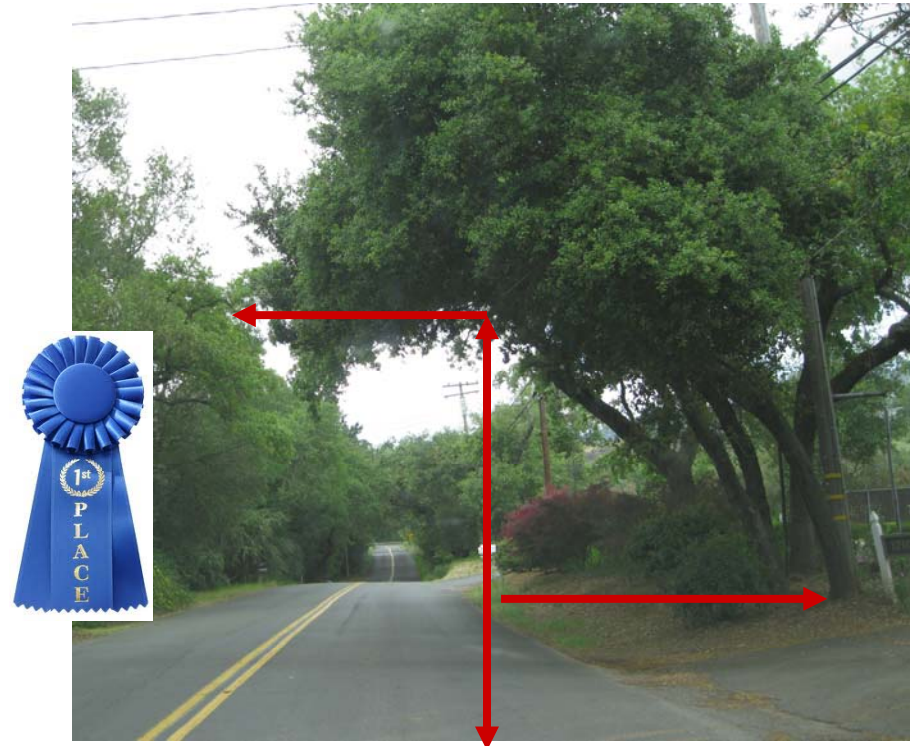
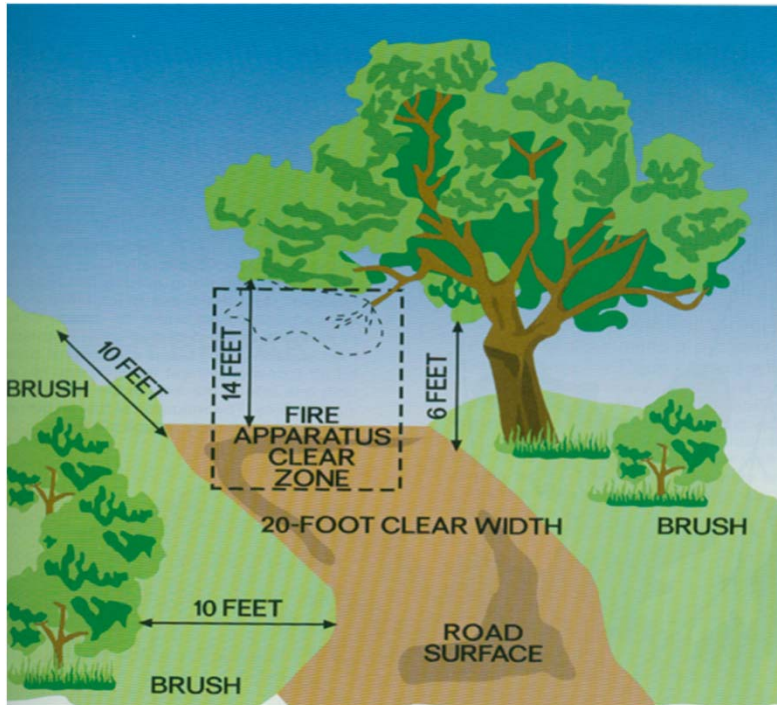
Better Example

- But move bare ground to nearest house



Defensible Access

It's doable, it's the law



(Maintained landscape shrubs OK)

- Create defensible space for 10-ft from roadside
- Consider driveway part of roadside

Change fire behavior through vegetation management

- Minimize ignition potential
- Reduce flame lengths
- Limit fire spread

- Done by these actions-

- Reduce fuel volume
- Increase moisture of fuels
- Change arrangement of fuels
- Affect chemistry



What you do MATTERS