



FIRE RETARDANT PLANTS

Appropriate vegetation, paths, paving and landscaping materials combined with timely maintenance of your garden will improve bushfire safety for your home. The most common fire risk factor around homes is the ignition of flammable materials by ember showers.

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

The following maintenance, garden design and plant choice factors should be considered in relation to fire:

- When trees and shrubs recommended for fire prone areas are correctly sited, they will conserve moisture, serve as a wind break by absorbing and deflecting radiant heat, and act as a barrier to flying sparks and embers
- Plants with a high moisture or salt content, or with a low oil content, will take much longer to ignite and will burn slowly. Also look for broad or fleshy leaves or smooth bark
- Avoid Conifers and rough fibrous bark trees. Eucalypts around houses or residential areas are dangerous as they are very flammable and their use should not be encouraged. Eucalypt species *globoidea*; *viminalis*; and *oreades* particularly, should be avoided
- Utilise understorey species such as strappy leaved *Lomandra* or *Dianella* that will retain moisture and retard fire
- Replace lawns and grass areas around buildings with succulent groundcovers, such as *Myoporum parvifolium*
- Trees should be planted to allow clear access to the house
- Arrange plants carefully and don't allow trees to overhang the house. Remove lower branches from trees
- Trees and shrubs should be spaced to avoid a continuous canopy that may carry fire
- Monitor tree growth, prune and remove dead limbs, and place any fallen leaves into enclosed compost bins
- Cut back native grass tufts and water regularly for a flush of green growth
- Paving, paths or pebble gardens near the house are preferable
- Plants around the house that can be pruned when fire threatens are a good idea
- Gardens near the house should be irrigated
- A body of water or an inorganic mulched area such as gravel or pebbles on the fire prone side of the house can be used as a fire break
- A well watered hedge on the fire-prone side of the house can reduce radiant heat and the spread of fire to the house
- Removing debris from the ground and gutters and any build up of dried materials will reduce fire risks
- Keeping gardens, compost piles and organic mulched areas damp, particularly during high fire danger weather, is appropriate

