

Region 9 (Northern California) Fire-Resistant Plants for Home and Gardens

Protect your home and yard from wildfires by using fire-retardant plants

With a changing climate, mean global temperatures are rising, resulting in more prolonged periods of heat and drought. This has led to an increase in wildfires. According to *The Washington Post*, 1 in 6 Americans, particularly those in California, live in areas “with significant wildfire risk,” and those numbers are increasing. Those who live in fire-prone areas, such as near woodlands or open rangeland, are the most vulnerable.

The type of vegetation in the landscape can affect the risk of fire damage to homes and properties. Some plants are more flammable than others, providing fuel that can make a fire worse. “Fire-resistant” doesn’t mean that plants are fireproof.

Homeowners can help protect their properties by including fire-resistant plants in their landscape. Here are some of the best fire-resistant plants to add to your yard.



1. Coral Bells

[Dolce® ‘Wildberry’](#)

Heuchera hybrid

Zones: 4-9

Height: 10” - 14”

Spread: 16” - 20”

Grown for the decorative foliage, this hardy perennial thrives in a wide range of growing conditions and is suitable for shade borders and rock gardens. Dolce® ‘Wildberry’ produces vibrant, purple foliage with a scalloped edge. The compact habit makes coral bells less flammable, making it a good choice to plant near homes or other structures.



2. Daylily

[Rainbow Rhythm® 'Going Bananas'](#)

Hemerocallis hybrid

Zones: 3-9

Height: 19" - 22"

Spread: 18" - 24"

One of the most beloved garden perennials, daylily produces trumpet-shaped flowers in a rainbow of colors that last just a day, hence the common name. Rainbow Rhythm® 'Going Bananas' is a reblooming variety with lightly scented, lemon-yellow flowers. The thick, grass-like foliage is moisture retentive, making plants less prone to igniting.



3. Hosta

[Shadowland® 'Empress Wu'](#)

Hosta hybrid

Zones: 3-9

Height: 3' - 4'

Spread: 5' - 6'

A favorite shade-garden perennial, hosta is grown for the decorative leaves in a wide range of colors, patterns, and shapes. One of the largest hosta varieties, Shadowland® 'Empress Wu' produces oversized pleated green leaves. Hosta prefers damp, shady sites and has broad foliage and stems that retain water, making hosta plants less flammable.



4. Ice Plant

[Kaleidoscope™ 'Dancing Embers'](#)

Delosperma hybrid

Zones: 5-10

Height: 2" - 4"

Spread: 20" - 24"

Ice plant is a tough succulent with colorful, daisy-like flowers and is suitable for rock gardens and waterwise landscapes. Kaleidoscope™ 'Dancing Embers' has bright orange-red flowers with a cream center for eye-popping color in the landscape. Ground covers, such as ice plant, have a low growth habit that inhibits taller flames that would ignite a home, making it a good choice to plant near building structures.



5. Lavender

[Sweet Romance®](#)

Lavandula angustifolia

Zones: 5-9

Height: 12" - 18"

Spread: 12" - 18"

Lavender is one of the most popular herbs, with scented flowers and foliage that have a wide range of culinary and medicinal uses. Sweet Romance® is a dwarf variety with rich-purple flower spikes and a compact habit suitable for containers and small spaces. Though lavender plants contain oils, lavender is slow to ignite if kept moist.



6. Mangave

[Art & Sol™ 'Thunderbird'](#)

Mangave hybrid

Zones: 9-11

Height: 8" - 12"

Spread: 10" - 12"

Mangave is a tender, drought-tolerant succulent with spiky leaves and a symmetrical appearance that lends structure to rock gardens and waterwise landscapes. Art & Sol™ 'Thunderbird' is a petite variety with dark-green leaves dotted with red spots for eye-catching appeal. Mangave is less likely to be killed by fire due to the thick, fleshy leaves that retain moisture.



7. Pinks

['Paint the Town Magenta'](#)

Dianthus hybrid

Zones: 4-9

Height: 6" - 8"

Spread: 12" - 14"

Also known as pinks, dianthus is a drought-tolerant perennial with strappy foliage and carnation-like flowers in different colors and patterns. Clump-forming varieties are suited to rock gardens and waterwise landscapes. Dianthus has many low and creeping forms that are less prone to fire damage.



8. Red Hot Poker

[Pyromania® 'Orange Blaze'](#)

Kniphofia hybrid

Zones: 5-9

Height: 24" - 30"

Spread: 18" - 24"

Also known as torch lily, this striking perennial has grass-like foliage and tall flower spikes that resemble red hot poker, hence the common name. Use in waterwise strips or mixed borders. The bright-orange flowers of Pyromania® 'Orange Blaze' light up the summer landscape with sizzling color. Red hot poker is one of the best fire-safe plants to place near your home, with a high moisture content and fire-resistant blooms.



9. Russian Sage

[‘Denim ’n Lace’](#)

Perovskia atriplicifolia

Zones: 4-9

Height: 28" - 32"

Spread: 34" - 38"

Russian sage is a carefree, shrubby perennial with long-lasting drifts of sky-blue flowers that appear in summer. ‘Denim ’n Lace’ has a compact, upright growth habit that is resistant to flopping. This heat- and drought-tolerant plant makes our list of fire-resistant plants, though plant placement should be away from homes or other structures due to oil content.



10. Salvia

[Rockin'® Fuchsia](#)

Salvia hybrid

Zones: 9-11

Height: 24" - 36"

Spread: 24" - 30"

Salvia is a perennial or annual that thrives in heat and dry conditions. Plants come in a range of sizes and flower colors and are useful for mixed borders, rock gardens, and waterwise landscapes. Rockin'® Fuchsia has bright-magenta flowers with a black calyx for eye-popping contrast.



11. Stonecrop

[Rock 'N Grow® 'Back in Black'](#)

Sedum hybrid

Zones: 3-9

Height: 20" - 24"

Spread: 26" - 30"

Stonecrop is a hardy perennial succulent with fleshy leaves and clusters of tiny, star-shaped flowers that add late-season color to the landscape. This carefree, heat- and drought-tolerant plant is commonly used in rock gardens and xeriscapes. Rock 'N Grow® 'Back in Black' produces deep-purple foliage and rose-pink flowers for a striking effect. Stonecrop is fire-resistant because of its drought tolerance and ability to store moisture in the thick, fleshy leaves.



12. Threadleaf Coreopsis

[Designer Threads™ 'Golden Needles'](#)

Coreopsis verticillata

Zones: 5-9

Height: 18" - 20"

Spread: 20" - 22"

This rugged native wildflower is highly adaptable to most soils, and is suitable for meadow landscapes and pollinator gardens. Designer Threads™ 'Golden Needles' has golden-yellow flowers with a deep-maroon center for stunning contrast. Coreopsis is drought tolerant with a compact growth habit, making it more resistant to wildfires.



13. Toffee Twist Sedge

[Graceful Grasses® Toffee Twist](#)

Carex flagellifera

Zones: 7-10

Height: 18" - 24"

Spread: 18" - 24"

Sedge is a low-maintenance perennial with soft grass-like foliage that adds fine texture to beds, containers, and mass plantings. Graceful Grasses® Toffee Twist has brown foliage and an elegant, weeping habit that lends movement to the landscape. Sedge is drought tolerant and regenerates quickly after wildfires.

FAQs

What plants are most fire resistant?

Plants that are fire resistant have a high moisture content, green growth, open structure, watery sap, and little accumulated dead material. Plants can be damaged by fire, even if they are resistant, if fires burn hot enough. Most deciduous trees and shrubs, including oak trees and lilac shrubs, are fire resistant.

What flowers and plants are highly flammable?

Plants that contain volatile resins, gummy sap, or oils; have papery bark; or have dry, brown woody parts are more flammable. These include evergreen conifers and eucalyptus.

How to fireproof your yard?

Take these steps to protect your home and landscape from wildfires. Though this can help make your home safer, it won't guarantee that your home and property will survive a wildfire.

- Create a defensible space by keeping plant material away from your home's foundation.

- Keep garden areas cleared of dried leaves, underbrush, and other debris.
- Prune out dead woody growth from trees and shrubs, which can fuel fires.
- Place more flammable plants farther away from your home.
- Water areas around your home, which will slow a wildfire.
- Use less flammable landscape materials such as gravel, decorative rock, or a lawn as a buffer around your home.
- Keep flammable landscape materials such as bark dust away from your home's foundation, and make sure it stays moist.