

ESTABLISH DEFENSIBLE SPACE



Creating a defensible space helps firefighters protect your home from wildfires.



Fire safety is a community effort: When homes are close together, creating a defensible space means neighbor helping neighbor.

PLANTING SEEDLINGS NEXT STEP IN FOREST RESTORATION

Thinning trees and vegetation on private property and neighboring public land is the first step toward restoring healthy, more fire-resistant forests throughout San Bernardino County, fire-protection officials say.

The next step is to introduce carefully selected seedlings in areas that have burned or been affected by bark beetle infestations. These native trees will help restore the original mixed conifer/hardwood forest, prevent erosion and ensure that the scenic mountainsides synonymous with the San Bernardino County Mountains will be available for future generations to enjoy.

Lake Arrowhead resident Lori Pearson is working with CAL FIRE, ReLeaf, and the Arrowhead Lake Association to further these goals. Pearson, a trained landscape architect, emphasizes the importance of planting trees grown from seeds harvested in the areas where they will be planted.

"Native trees support the natural wildlife of an area and, once established, they do not need supplemental watering," Pearson said. For the San Bernardino Mountains, she recommends such trees as Ponderosa, Jeffrey and Coulter pines. CAL FIRE is growing these and other native trees from local seed stock for reforestation purposes. Larger sizes will be available for homeowners to purchase at local nurseries this spring. Southern California Edison also collects seedlings and donated 20,000 to the program last year.

Pearson is also working with the Arrowhead Lake Association Forest and Property Planning Committee to develop a demonstration garden at the Tavern Bay Beach Club. Scheduled for completion in late spring, the garden will showcase native and adaptable drought-tolerant plants that will thrive in the planting area. Commercially available shrubs and ground covers will be planted as an example for local homeowners.

The garden will exhibit proper spacing for trees to improve fire safety and promote a healthy forest. Proper spacing depends on slope and proximity to structures, but should be natural and avoid understorey plantings. Fire protection officials recommend spacing trees 20 to 30 feet apart, depending on the slope of the terrain.

For further information about the demonstration garden, contact the Arrowhead Lake Association at (909) 337-2595.



Landscape with plants resistant to fire and with low moisture requirements. Officials recommend planting native trees grown from local seedlings and spacing them 20 to 30 feet apart. Do not plant lawns or other high-water-use vegetation around the base of trees. Mulch around trees to discourage weeds and slow evaporation. Build a four-to-six inch earthen dam around the drip line of all trees and shrubs so they retain the water they receive. Train plants to develop deep roots by watering thoroughly but infrequently.

REPLANT WISELY; HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

ReLeaf, an organization devoted to developing healthy forests in California, is working to educate the community about appropriate seedling selection and planting. Unlike some non-native trees that require additional watering to survive, native trees do not need special care. For more information about ReLeaf and for contacts and seedling suppliers, call toll-free (866) 923-3473.

Children can also play an important role in the restoration process. The Children's Forest Association has created a hands-on curriculum called Great Seeds Native Plant Restoration Program. Through this program, children can germinate native seeds, monitor the success of restoration projects, and share their knowledge with the community by leading greenhouse tours and educational presentations. For more information on the Children's Forest Association and how to get involved, call (909) 382-2777, or visit: www.mountaincommunitiesreleaf.org.

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