

## **MWPA Ecologically Sound Practices Defensible Space for Ecological Benefit Committee**

The goal of this committee is to develop best management practices for defensible space that enhance ecological values.

*“A fire smart yard is an ecologically healthy yard” - Fay Mark*

Best management practices are intended to provide a basis for development of educational materials and guidelines for the general public, residents, defensible space inspectors and workforce, and landscape professionals. The committee’s work is intended to support and enhance printed materials, online resources, and training programs funded by the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA) and offered by the MWPA or other jurisdictions and organizations, particularly FIREsafe MARIN, UC Cooperative Extension’s Master Gardeners, and Marin Municipal Water District.

### **Committee working groups:**

Current working groups

#### **1. Plant Choice/Replacement plants**

Exclude invasive species, high water users and “fire hazardous” plants

Feature natives and other wildlife friendly species

Task: develop short list of replacement species for those on fire hazardous plants. Review FSM hazard plants, and MV d-space code excluded species.

#### **2. Wildlife Benefit**

Pollen and Food plants

Structural habitat

Water sources

Do work outside of nesting season.

Task: Develop list of tips to enhance fire smart yards as wildlife habitat

#### **3. Maintenance**

Appropriate mulches

Leaf and plant detritus

Pruning for fire resistance

Transition from risky yard to fire smart yard over time

Review existing online info and id gaps and enhancements

Task: brochure for landscape companies

### **Next up working group**

- Training topics for landscape contractors and maintenance workers

### **Future topics for working groups**

- Training topics for inspectors
- Actions to enhance Carbon sequestration

- Keep heritage trees and larger well-established trees
- Pruning practices: limbing up from below, crown cleaning, prune away from roofs

**Resources:**

<https://www.firesafemarin.org/defensible-space>

[http://marinmg.ucanr.edu/Fire-smart Landscaping/](http://marinmg.ucanr.edu/Fire-smart_Landscaping/)

<http://www.marinwater.org/484/Watershed-Wise-Landscapes>

<https://calscape.org/about.php>

<http://www.xerces.org/pollinator-resource-center/california>

<https://caufc.org> (CA urban forests council)

<https://treecareforbirds.com/bmps-and-handouts/>