

# CREATING DEFENSIBLE SPACE

**Defensible space is an area around a structure where forest fuels and vegetation are treated, cleared, or reduced to slow the spread of wildfire towards the structure. It also reduces the chance of a structure fire moving from the building to the surrounding forest. Your house is more likely to withstand a wildfire if grasses, brush, trees, and other common forest fuels are managed to reduce a fire's intensity.**

Many people do not view the plants growing on their property as a threat. All vegetation including native and non-native plants can serve as potential fuel for a wildfire. If vegetation is properly maintained, a wildfire can be slowed, the length of flames shortened, and the amount of heat reduced. All of these factors can assist firefighters in defending your home.



**Do you have at least 30 feet of space surrounding your home that is lean, clean, and green?**

**LEAN** – Prune shrubs and cut back tree branches especially those within 15 feet of your chimney.

**CLEAN** – Remove all dead plant material from around your home; this includes dead leaves, dry grass, and stacked firewood.

**GREEN** – Plant fire-resistant vegetation that is healthy and green for most of the year.

## The Lean, Clean, and Green Checklist:

- Emphasize the use of low-growing herbaceous (non-woody) plants that stay green during the fire season. Herbaceous plants include grass, clover, a variety of groundcovers, bedding plants, bulbs, perennial flowers, and conservation grasses.
- Emphasize use of mulches, rock, and non-combustible hard surfaces (concrete sidewalks, brick patios, and asphalt driveways).
- Keep deciduous, native, and ornamental trees and shrubs healthy and free of dead branches.
- Minimize the use of native and ornamental coniferous shrubs and trees (such as juniper, arborvitae, and mugho pine) and tall exotic grasses (such as pampas grass).
- Retain small groups of wildland shrubs and trees as long as they are kept free of dead wood and pruned to reduce the amount of fuel.
- Remove tree limbs growing within 15 feet of a chimney, encroach on powerlines, or touch the house.

**By changing the characteristics of the surrounding vegetation, you will reduce the wildfire threat to your home.**

