

Eastern United States Fire Performance Plant Selector

Fire is a natural part of our environment. Fire has many beneficial uses in fire-dependent ecosystems. However, it can have very serious consequences in the built environment where it destroys structures and can harm or even kill those who are unable to escape its wrath.

The expansion of residential development into fire-prone areas compels us to consider the factors that influence how fire moves across the landscape. Fire movement is affected by many things—where a building is located, the type of building materials used, building architecture, wind, and how vegetation is selected and managed in fire-prone landscapes.

The **Eastern United States Fire Performance Plant Selector** is a Web-based tool that can be used to reduce fire risk in the home landscape. This tool uses plant characteristics and environmental principles to rank the potential for a plant species to ignite, burn, and move fire across a landscape. It provides recommendations on plant selection and location to minimize fire risk.

Users can conduct searches related to their specific site needs, plant characteristics, and fire risk. Users can generate factsheets, complete with plant photographs, and personalized plant lists. They can also export this information into an Excel spreadsheet or Word document.

The Fire Performance Plant Selector:

- Replaces generalized fire-resistant or fire-retardant plant lists and flammability ratings with a more credible resource that is based on a scientifically validated methodology.
- Helps users select and plant common trees, shrubs, ground covers, vines, and grasses to minimize fire risk in the landscape of their home.
- Provides insight into how existing vegetation might impact the movement of fire across a landscape.
- Builds on the expertise of the Firewise, urban forestry, horticultural, and landscape architecture professions to collectively address fire safety and vegetation selection.

All plants will burn. External site factors will always have a great impact on how fire moves across the landscape.



Photo courtesy of the Bureau of Land Management

This tool was designed for users who have knowledge of Firewise principles and for those who have knowledge of plant material. This ensures that homeowners, natural resource professionals, and Firewise professionals can work together for the greatest benefit.

The Fire Performance Plant Selector should be considered as only an added safety measure for developing a Firewise landscape. To access the Fire Performance Plant Selector, go to www.fireplantselector.org.

Additional Resources

- U.S. Forest Service Fire and Aviation Management Program
<http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fire/index.shtm>
- Interface South
<http://www.interfacesouth.org/>
- Firewise
<http://www.firewise.org/>
- Fire in the Wildland-Urban Interface: Preparing a Firewise Plant List for WUI Residents
<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/FR/FR15100.pdf>

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