



Photo: Bryant Baker/Los Padres ForestWatch

Protect Your Home. Protect Your Community.

Preparing your home and neighborhood for wildfire isn't just a smart choice — **it's essential.**

That's why Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, with the help of other experts in our area, is helping you improve your home's resilience, from hardening structures to landscaping with native, water-wise plants that offer beauty and fire resistance.

Being prepared doesn't have to be overwhelming. This checklist offers clear, achievable actions that can make a real difference when used alongside neighborhood readiness actions.

Use this as a guide to protect what matters most: your **family**, your **home**, and your **neighborhood**.



FIREWISE PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

Prepare Your Home



Roof

- Use Class A fire-rated roofing (metal, tile, fiberglass asphalt shingles)
- Seal roof-to-wall gaps with metal flashing
- Keep roof and gutters clear of leaves and debris or cover with gutter guards
- Install spark arrestors on chimneys



Vents & Eaves

- Cover all vents with 1/8” metal mesh
- Use ember-resistant vents in exposed areas
- Enclose eaves/soffits with fire-resistant materials (fiber cement, stucco)



Siding & Exterior Walls

- Use non-combustible siding (fiber cement, stucco, metal)
- Seal cracks and gaps
- Add metal flashing where siding meets decks/roofs



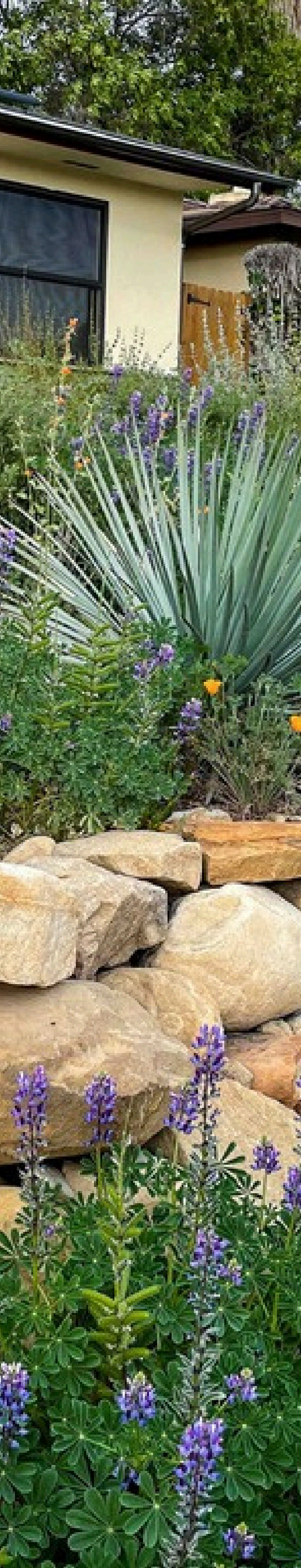
Windows & Doors

- Install dual-pane windows (one pane tempered glass)
- Use metal or treated wood frames
- Replace hollow-core doors with solid-core or fire-rated doors
- Consider fire shutters for high-risk areas



Decks & Fencing

- Build with fire-resistant materials (metal, composite, treated wood)
- Keep areas beneath decks clear of debris
- Use non-combustible fencing within 5 feet of structures



FIREWISE PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

Prepare Your Landscaping



Choice & Placement

- Prioritize native, fire-resilient species
- Avoid oily, resinous, aromatic, or waxy plants near structures
- Avoid peeling bark or fine, feathery foliage close to the home
- Design open “plant islands” and avoid vertical layering (ladder fuels)
- Increase spacing on slopes



Defensible Zones

- Zone 0 (0 to 5 ft)
 - No flammable materials or bark mulch
 - Use potted plants or seasonal annuals (cut back in dry months)
- Zone 1 (5 to 30 ft)
 - Keep plants “lean, green, and clean”
 - Choose low-growing, widely spaced plants
 - Prune to maintain open shapes and airflow
- Zone 2 (30 to 100 ft)
 - Continue spacing and maintenance
 - Store firewood, propane, and combustibles at least 30 feet from structures
 - Collaborate with neighbors if zones overlap
- Zone 3 (Access Zone)
 - Support emergency access — think safety and visibility
 - Maintain a clear line of sight to infrastructure like water tanks, hydrants, or gates
 - Reduce vegetation within 10 ft of roadways to max height of 4 inches
 - Trim trees to maintain at least 14 feet of vertical clearance over access roads



Ongoing Maintenance

- Water regularly — dry plants burn faster
- Remove dead limbs, dry leaves, and surface debris
- Prune for open shapes and airflow
- Limb trees/shrubs at least 6 ft from the ground
- Increase maintenance during driest months (Aug to Jan)



FIREWISE PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

Prepare Your Family



Get a Free Evaluation

- Schedule a free home assessment with the Santa Barbara County Firesafe Council



Make an Action Plan

- Identify multiple evacuation routes
- Designate a family meeting spot
- Plan for pets and large animals
- Establish a communication plan (include out-of-area contact)
- Print and share the plan with everyone in your household



Stay Ready

- Have fire extinguishers—and know how to use them
- Learn how to shut off gas, electricity, and water
- Build an emergency supply kit (food, water, meds, flashlight, first aid, etc.)
- Keep a second kit in your car
- Post emergency contacts visibly or save in your phone
- Have a battery-powered radio or scanner for updates



The 6 P's — What to Grab

- People & Pets: Evacuation plan, carriers, leashes
- Papers & Phones: IDs, insurance, key docs (consider a flash drive)
- Prescriptions: Medications, glasses, medical equipment
- Pictures: Irreplaceable photos and keepsakes
- Personal Electronics: Laptops, chargers, backups
- Plastic & Cash: Credit cards and small bills