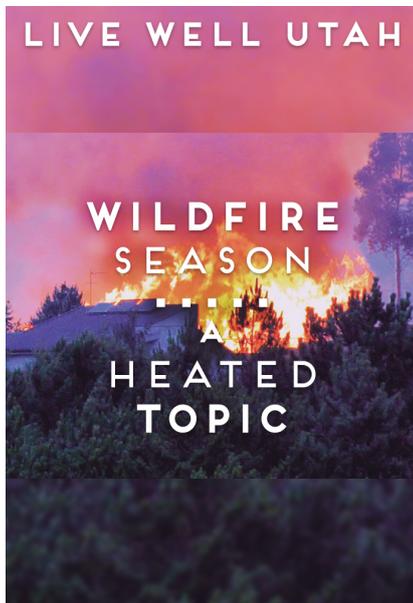


Wildfire Season is Ablaze in Utah // Is Your House Safe?



Wildfires are a very heated topic in Utah right now. With such dry conditions and high temperatures, wildfires can't help but take the spotlight.

Fight Fire With... Yard Work?!

Did you know that the likelihood of a home burning is directly related to the amount of flammable material near it? To lessen the chance of a fire destroying your home, follow these 9 simple, life-saving tips:

1. Replace wood roofs with fire-resistant roofing material. Enclose the eaves of your home with soffits and screen openings with 1/8" galvanized mesh. This will reduce the chances of blowing embers entering your attic space and igniting your home.

2. Think about the places around your home where leaves collect after a windstorm; this is where burning embers will also collect, making it important to regularly clear leaves and pine needles from the valleys of roofs, gutters and deck corners.

3. Remove debris from the yard and mow, irrigate and prune. The first 3 to 5 feet from the home should be a no-burn zone consisting of pavers, concrete or small, succulent plants. In the zone between 6 and 100 feet out, the landscape should be clean and green, with dead leaves, needles and twigs removed. There should be few highly flammable trees and shrubs in this zone, and trees should be pruned. To be effective, this must be done on a regular basis, depending on the type and amount of vegetation.

4. Select appropriate species to grow in the home ignition zone. Evergreens and scrub oaks tend to be highly flammable, while aspen and many broad-leafed ornamentals tend to be less flammable. Plants that are green and moist during the hottest, driest part of the year are best.

5. The wildlands beyond 100 feet should be thinned. Avoid dumping brush in this zone. Often we do not control the land 100 feet from our homes, but a plan can still be in place. Contact neighbors and talk with them about safety and what you can do together. This includes individual neighbors but may also include government neighbors like the U.S. Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management.

6. Keep firewood, construction material and other flammable items at least 30 feet from your home. Consider burying your propane tank and be sure it is located at least 100 feet from any structure with vegetation cleared 10 feet around each tank.

7. Make sure emergency personnel can easily locate and identify your home. Be sure house numbers are clearly marked

and visible.

8. Provide ample turnaround and overhead space for the ingress and egress of large firefighting equipment.

9. Take the time to protect your home. Homes that do not meet minimum safety standards are more likely to be bypassed by firefighters seeking to limit unnecessary risks to the safety of the crew and vehicles.

For a list of recommended plants and more information on landscaping to minimize fire hazard, visit USU Extension forestry's website at forestry.usu.edu or call 435-797-0560

Author – Julene Reese

References

Darren McAvoy, USU Extension program associate, Department of Wildland Resources, 435-797-0560, darren.mcavoy@usu.edu

Michael Kuhns, USU Extension forestry specialist, 435-797-4056, mike.kuhns@usu.edu
