

episode six: Creating a Sustainable and Beautiful Firescape: 27 1/2 Minutes



Leaf Gardener finds himself helpless when his beloved rubber chicken, Dirtrude, is stuck in a tree. Thanks to the heroic fireman, Blaze Burns, Dirtrude is rescued. To show his gratitude, Leaf offers to assist in adding a touch of beauty to an otherwise drab but highly functioning fire wise garden. Leaf, Blaze, and Dirtrude unite to create a safe, sustainable, and beautiful fire-wise landscape and have a great time while doing it! An easy to follow guide is mapped out so that anyone can create a fire-wise garden around their home. Also, great tips are offered in order to create a food plot on a balcony setting. And last, but certainly not least, the Water Wise Guys team up in search of “Opera Winnepeg” and stumble across some highly efficient watering techniques along the way!

key concepts

1. Create Zones

- **Zone 4** is the area farthest from the house. Larger shrubs, preferably natives are ideal. Generally, plants should be grouped about 30-40 feet apart from each other in order to cancel out the chance of fire spreading from plant to plant. Make sure that this area is maintained in terms of pruning and weeding in order to ensure that any possible fuel for the fire is absent. Little to no irrigation should be necessary.
- **Zone 3** should consist of mainly smaller plants than that of zone four, reaching about knee-high. Also, these plants should have short flame duration. Remember, reduce what could act as fuel for the fire so that the fire will burn itself out!
- **Zone 2** should be more heavily irrigated and full of plants that are low to the ground, possessing succulent tissue and are high in moisture content. Also, make sure that there is a separation between the ground and the trees. Again, the goal is to eliminate the possibility of the fire reaching the house, so eliminate the chance of the fire spreading wherever possible!
- **Zone 1** is the area immediately surrounding the house. This area should be absent of trees and consist of turf, meadow (preferable), or other fire reluctant plants. Again, make sure to keep this area free of any plant litter as to not provide any possible fuel to the fire. Trees should be 10 feet away from the house or more and all dead plants and weeds need to be kept out. Nothing flammable in this area!



2. Note the Physical Characteristics of Your Landscape

- Take a soil sample
- Note any slopes
- Take into account areas of sun and shade
- Remove weeds
- Photograph the area that you are renovating

3. Making Your Firescape Beautiful

- Create a focal point:
 - Provide a backdrop
 - Allow plants to act as a screen to less than beautiful surroundings such as the street.
 - Create complimentary assemblages of colorful plants and flowers



4. Owen's Mailbag!

- Some tips on growing food on a balcony setting:
 - Use containers that are deep enough for the roots
 - Find a location where the plant will be spending at least half of the day in direct sunlight
 - Use a high grade potting soil that has mycorrhizal fungi
 - Take extra care of container plants making sure to avoid over-watering or excessive heat.



Celebrity Corner with Cathie!

The Garden Wise Guys team up to explore the most efficient way to water a landscape while searching for “Opera Winnepeg”. The team demonstrates how different sprinkler head sizes should be utilized in order to accommodate a lawn which is not a uniform shape or size. The team also explores how different systems can be utilized on slopes to ensure maximum efficiency. Cathie offers advice on checking each irrigation station for leaks and possible need for repairs at least once per month. Cathie also suggests adjusting irrigation clocks seasonally and checking the watering index weekly on sbwater.org!

Visit the demonstration firescape garden at 2411 Stanwood Drive in Santa Barbara.

Contact your local fire department for suggestions on creating your own firescape at (805) 965-5254.

