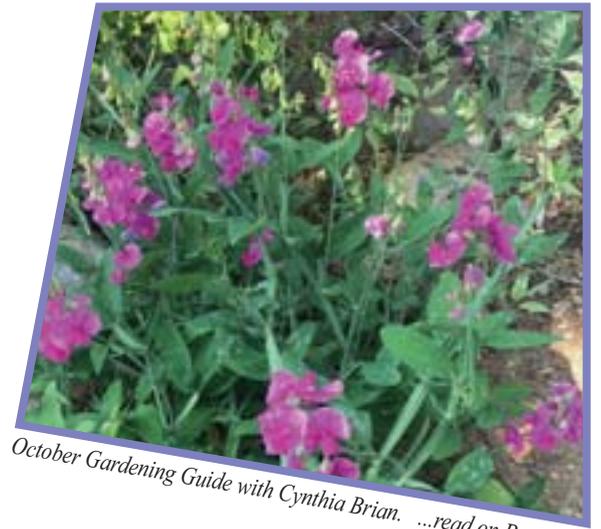


# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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## Fire-resistant landscaping tips for front and back yards

By Jenn Freedman



Fire-resistant shrub: coffeeberry

Photos Jenn Freedman

Another scorching summer has led to record-breaking wildfires across California, including three major brushfires in Lamorinda. As residents contemplate landscape updates in the coming year, it is important to be aware of crucial guidelines that will aid in smarter landscaping decisions.

A firescape, or fire-resistant landscape, uses plants less likely to burn and strategically places them to resist the spread of fire to your home. Ac-

ording to the Cal Fire website, readyforwildfire.org, there are several fire-resistant landscaping tips to consider when designing your yard:

- Create fire-safe zones using stone walls, pathways, and patios.
- Cover bare spaces with rock, gravel, and gardens.
- While fire-proof plants don't exist, choose high-moisture plants that grow close to the ground and have low sap and resin content.

- Avoid continuous tree or shrub canopy adjacent to the home or other structures.
- Do not place medium to large shrubs beneath trees.
- Make sure to have a defensible space of 100 feet around your home, which is required by law and includes two zones: Zone 1 – or “lean, green, and clean zone” – extends 30 feet out from buildings, structures, and decks. Remove all dead plants/grass/weeds/debris from yard, roof, and gutter. Trim trees regularly, keeping branches at least 10 feet from other trees. Zone 2 – or “reduced fuel zone” – fills the remaining 70 feet (or to property line). Be sure to cut grass down to a maximum of four inches high, remove fallen debris, and create horizontal and vertical spacing between shrubs and trees.

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Fire-resistant tree: citrus