



Firewise Landscaping: Combining Knowledge and Technology in Plant Selection

***Wildfire in the Northeast – Meeting the Challenge
December 2016, Mystic, CT***

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Discussion of the *Eastern Fire Performance Plant Selector*

- Project concept and development
- Current status
- Online review of the Selector
- Questions

How it all started...

- Fall 2003 - urban forestry grant proposals requested by the US Forest Service U&CF Program
- WVDOF recognized need to integrate firewise principles into landscaping recommendations
- WVDOF submitted a concept to develop a tool for both urban forestry and fire professionals to use in decision-making
- Project originally funded for Fiscal Year 2004

Concept and Development

- Original concept was for an interactive database of urban trees and shrubs
- Provides a link between plant characteristics and firewise principles
- Could be searched based on growth characteristics, flammability and needs of the homeowner
- Program would generate a list of recommended plants, plus create corresponding factsheets

Concept and Development

- Project team members recruited
 - Urban foresters
 - Firewise coordinators
 - Computer specialists
- Existing plant lists reviewed and adapted
 - Virginia “Firewise Landscaping for Woodland Homes”
 - Ohio Division of Forestry Firewise plant list
 - Northern Trees database
 - Various other sources
- Consultant hired to build the database

Current Status

- Where we are now
 - Website
 - All components are functional
 - Some browsers don't support full functionality
 - Use Mozilla Firefox for best experience
 - Contact information in need of updates
 - Plant List
 - 541 plant varieties in the list at this time
 - List reviewed and updated as necessary
 - More species need to be added in future

Online Resources

The Firewise Communities website provides links to various state plant lists. These sources are science-based, consistent with Firewise principles, and are updated periodically.

<http://firewise.org/wildfire-preparedness/firewise-landscaping-and-plant-lists.aspx>



Website Review

www.fireplantselector.org

Plant Factsheets

Fire Performance Plant Selector Factsheet

American Holly
Ilex opaca



Notes: Red and yellow forms available-produces much berries.

Plant Characteristics	
Plant Height:	50 (15m)
Form:	Pyramidal
Native Plant:	Yes
Growth Rate:	Medium
Number of Trunks:	Single
Bark:	Smooth
Pest Resistance:	High
Leaf Color:	Green Yellow & Green
Leaf Surface:	Simple
Leaf Type:	Waxy-dense
Ignitable Leaf Characteristics:	Evergreen
Leaf Persistence:	High
Pest Resistance:	High

Utility & Urban Use	
Urban Use:	Medium
Utility Use:	No
Response to Pruning:	No

Fire Performance	
Landscape Zone:	L23
Firewise Rating:	AT Risk Firewise (3)
Ladder Potential:	Yes


Environment	
Cold Hardiness Zone:	5
Heat Tolerance Zone:	5
Golf pin:	Adic
Sun Exposure:	Full Sun
Tolerance to Poorly Drained Soils:	High
Drought Resistance:	Medium

User with Firewise Knowledge
Query Parameters: Choosing All Plants

Eastern United States Performance Plant Selector
US Forest Service, Northeastern Area, State & Private Forestry and Urban Forestry south
in partnership with West Virginia Division of Forestry and Ohio State University
For more information, visit <http://www.firewiseselector.org>

Fire Performance Plant Selector Factsheet

Smooth Hydrangea
Hydrangea arborescens



Notes:

Plant Characteristics	
Plant Height:	6' (1.8m)
Form:	Vase
Native Plant:	Yes
Growth Rate:	Medium
Number of Trunks:	Multi-stem >= 6
Bark:	Furrowed
Pest Resistance:	Medium
Leaf Color:	Green Green & White
Leaf Surface:	Glabrous
Leaf Type:	Simple
Ignitable Leaf Characteristics:	Papery-thin
Leaf Persistence:	Deciduous
Pest Resistance:	Medium

Utility & Urban Use	
Urban Use:	High
Utility Use:	Yes
Response to Pruning:	High

Fire Performance	
Landscape Zone:	L23
Firewise Rating:	Firewise (1)
Ladder Potential:	Yes

Environment	
Cold Hardiness Zone:	5
Heat Tolerance Zone:	7
Golf pin:	Adaptable
Sun Exposure:	Full Sun
Tolerance to Poorly Drained Soils:	Medium
Drought Resistance:	Low

Urban Use	
Utility Use:	Yes
Response to Pruning:	Yes
Invasiveness:	Yes
Urban Use:	High

User with Firewise Knowledge
Query Parameters: Landscape Zone = L23, L23, Firewise Rating = Firewise, MODERATELY Firewise

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A stylized illustration of a forest. The scene is dominated by green tones. In the foreground, there is a grassy field with small, tufted patches of grass. Several trees with thick, brown trunks and dense, rounded green canopies are scattered across the landscape. The background shows more trees and a soft, hazy light, suggesting a misty or overcast day. The overall style is clean and modern, with a focus on natural elements.

Questions?