

Fire in the Urban Landscape

What Urban Foresters can do to help maintain the urban forest in fire prone areas

Lynnette Short
CAL FIRE - Urban and Community Forestry Program
San Diego Regional Urban Forests Council
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Objectives

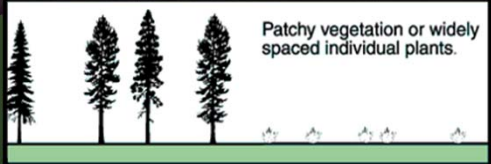
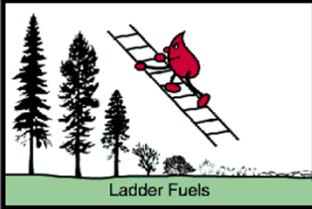

- What are the issues?
 - Are trees and vegetation a threat to homes and lives?
 - Unnecessary removal or exclusion of trees
- What led us to these issues?
- What have we learned?
- What can Urban Foresters can do to help?

Are all trees and vegetation a threat to homes or lives?

- If managed properly – No
 - Defensible space
 - Condition of the trees



Defensible Space



Patchy vegetation or widely spaced individual plants.

Conditions of the trees

- Many factors determine condition
 - Fuel moisture
 - Dead to live ratio
 - Overall health



What led to the issues?

- Past events
 - Oakland, Ca fires 1991
 - California fires 2003
 - Melbourne fires 2009
 - California fires 2017
- Fear
- Lack of understanding
- Ulterior motives

What have we learned?

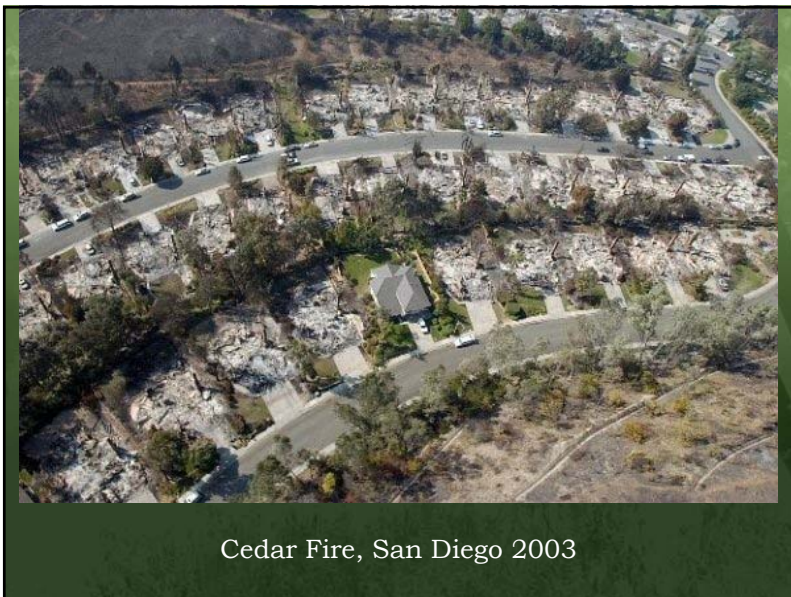
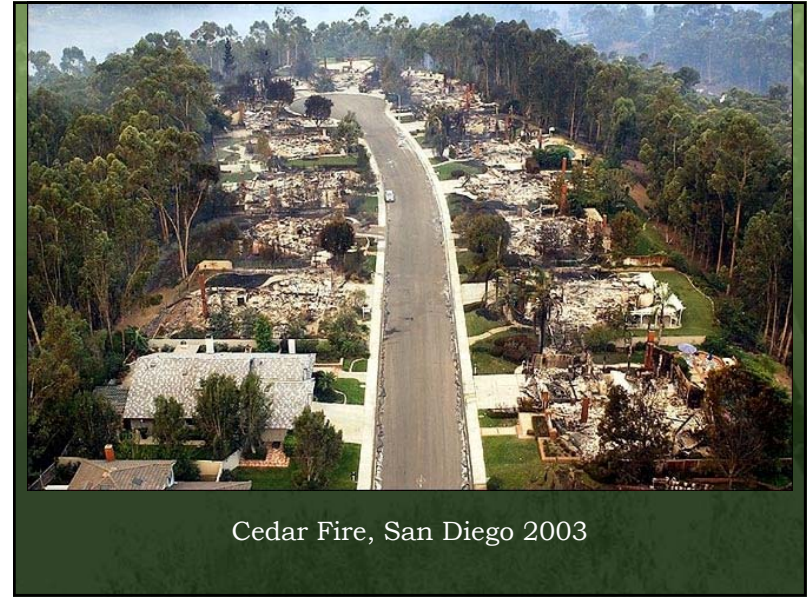
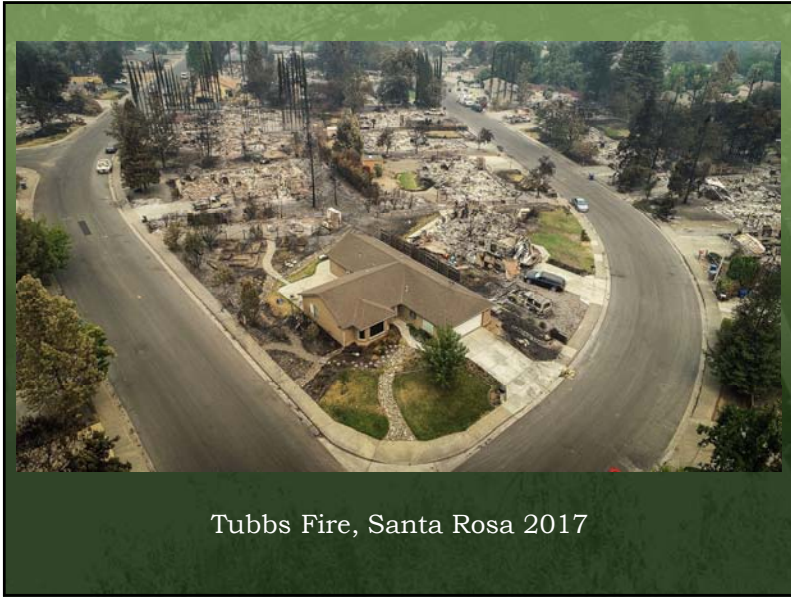
- Trees in close proximity to structures stay intact, during and after wildfires
- Main cause of structure loss = fire brands (embers) carried far distances by winds
- Homes burned due to:
 - Inadequate fire resistant materials
 - Lack of defensible space
- Trees didn't burn the houses!



Tubbs Fire, Santa Rosa 2017

Fire in the Urban Landscape: what urban foresters can do to help maintain the urban forest in fire prone areas, Lynnette Short, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Presented at San Diego Regional Urban Forests Meeting, October 3, 2018





What can we do?

- Know your local fire codes
- Work with city planners and fire inspectors
- References
 - Jack Cohen, retired fire scientist, US Forest Service
<https://www.fs.fed.us/rmrs/science-spotlights/protecting-your-home-wildland-fire>
 - Protecting your home from wildfire
<https://disastersafety.org/ibhs/protecting-your-business-from-wildfire/>