

# A few definitions...

## Shaded Fuel Break

A treatment made to reduce forest or woodland tree density, primarily to improve growth, enhance forest health, recover potential tree mortality or reduce hazardous fuels to change fire behavior and allow for improved fire suppression. A shaded fuel break is created by thinning the understory and ladder fuels including thick brush and small trees six inches or smaller in diameter. This does not mean clear cutting.

## Defensible Space

The area of at least 100 feet around your house and other structures in which you've modified the landscape to improve the odds for firefighters defending your home. Please note: 100 feet of defensible space is required by California law [PRC4291].

## Treatment Methods

### Lop and Scatter

Felling, cutting branches, tops of trees into lengths and spreading the plant material evenly over the ground.

### Chipping

The use of a machine for chipping small trees, limbs, tops, and brush into chip sizes. The chips are larger and coarser than saw dust and make for a good mulch. Utilize the Butte County Fire Safe Council's Chipper Program available November-June. Call 530/877-0984 or visit the website at [www.ButteFireSafe.org](http://www.ButteFireSafe.org).

### Mastication

Mechanical chopping, grinding of vegetation by a rotary head mounted on track or wheel operated piece of equipment. Vegetation remains on the ground in various shredded sizes, larger than chips and is beneficial for erosion and slows re-growth.

### Weed Eater Brush Blade

Brush blade attachments on weed eaters to cut small diameter brush and trees.

### Brush Mower

A mowing device that cuts through smaller diameter brush and trees into a shredded condition making for good mulch and slows grow back.

### Herbicide

Products that can be applied by broadcast spray or stump painting to kill the brush plant (e.g. Roundup® or similar product. Follow label instructions.

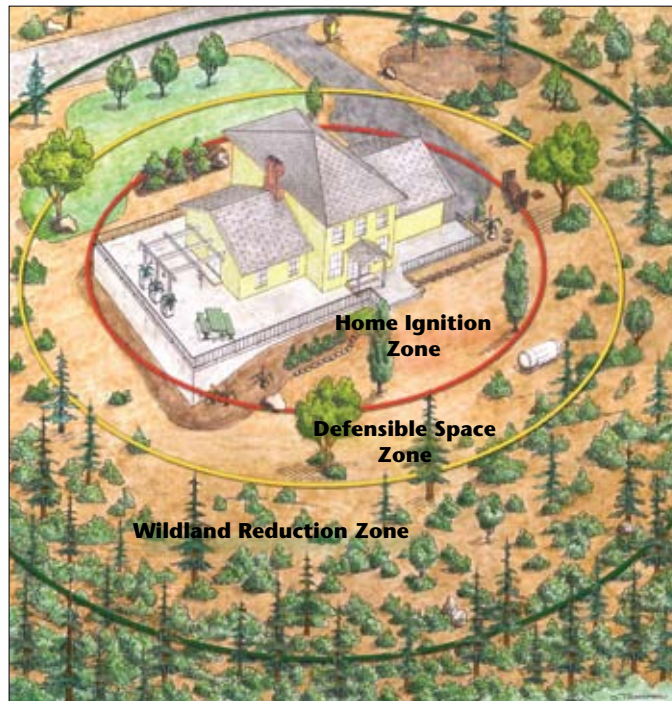
### Browsing

Browsing is the use of animals to feed on any kind of standing vegetation.(i.e. goats, sheep, cattle or other livestock).

### Hand Pile and Burn

Cutting and staking brush or trees in piles by hand to burn under the proper environmental conditions to keep the fire confined to the pile area. Contact your local fire department or CAL-FIRE/Butte County Fire Department (538-7111) for burning regulations and permits. Before you burn call the Butte County Air Quality Management District (toll-free: 866-240-0859) to determine burn days for your area.

Design and printing: [www.FireSafeHelp.com](http://www.FireSafeHelp.com)



# When to do maintenance:

## Watch for thigh-high growth!

When your brush, trees and other vegetation has grown to reach the height of your thighs, it's time to do maintenance.



## Be sure to do the right thing at the right time—

- The best time to maintain your shaded fuel break is between November and June.
- Each year, CAL-FIRE responds to more than 1,600 fires statewide caused by equipment such as mowers, chainsaws, tractors and trimmers.

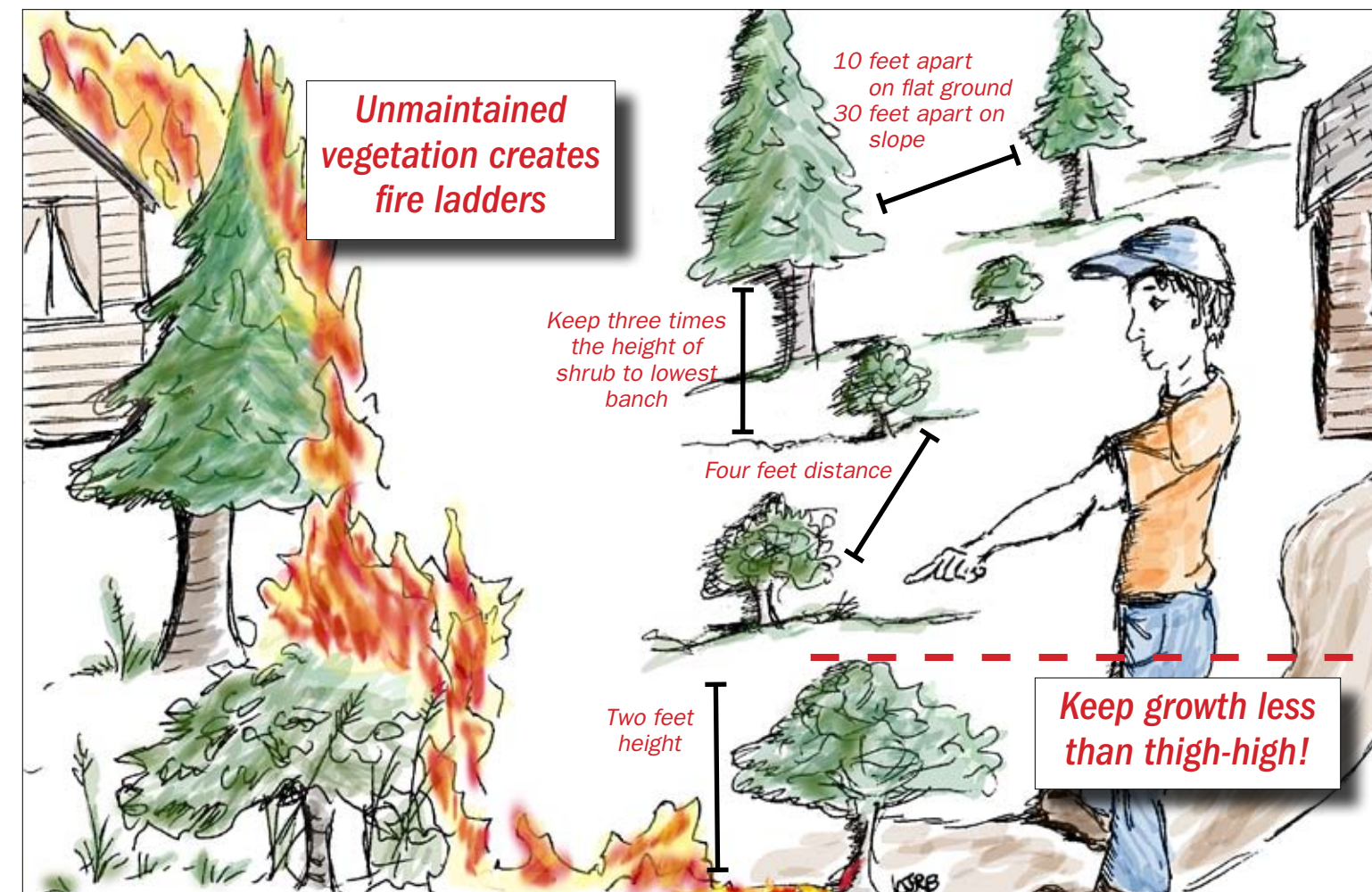
## If you choose to work during the fire season (typically July–October):

- Don't work during red flag weather conditions. Check out the California Fire Weather page at: <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/sto/fire.php>
- Finish all work before 10 a.m. and keep a water source nearby.



[www.ButteFireSafe.org](http://www.ButteFireSafe.org)  
877-0984

# Here's what to look for:



# Maintaining Defensible Space and Your Shaded Fuel Break



*A how-to guide to keeping your property firesafe*

Overgrown forest with fire ladder fuels.



Healthy forest with shaded fuel break.
















Well-constructed shaded fuel break that's grown in and ready for maintenance.

Butte County Fire Safe Council · [www.ButteFireSafe.org](http://www.ButteFireSafe.org) · 877-0984



# Here's what to do!

| Photo   | Plant  | Status             | Treat this way when above thigh high:  | Treat this when lower than one foot:  | Notes:  |
|---|--|--------------------|--|---|---|
|    | <b>Black oak</b>   | Native             | Prune main plant into the shape of a tree focusing growth on one central branch or sprout. Lop branches. Scatter, chip or burn.  | Hand cut with loppers, use weed eater with brush blade or use brush mower.  | Flame-resistant foliage can moderate fire behavior by absorbing heat.   |
|    | <b>California Bay Laurel</b><br>"Oregon Myrtle"                          | Native             | Prune main plant into the shape of a tree, focusing growth on one central branch or sprout. Lop branches. Scatter, chip or burn.   | Prune all stump sprouts.  | Best control if cut is below the root-crown ball, about an inch below soil surface.                             |
|   | <b>Blackberry</b><br>"Himalayan"<br>"California Blackdap or Smooth-Leaf" | Invasive<br>Native | Hand-cut thick vines with loppers. Herbicide will discourage growth back. Weed eating does not to remove new growth or leaves; repeated goat grazing is required to decrease number of live plants.                                    | Use of weed eater does not discourage grow back; browse with goats.   | Repeated goat grazing is required to decrease the number of live plants.  |
|  | <b>Ceanothus</b><br>"Buck Brush"<br>"Deer Brush"<br>"Sweet Birch"        | Native             | Hand cut with loppers, masticate or use brush mower.   | Hand cut with loppers, use weed eater with brush blade or use brush mower.  | Sweet Birch sprouts very aggressively—hence, regrowth is very fast.   |
|  | <b>Coffee Berry</b>  | Native             | Prune main plant into the shape of a tree. Lop branches. Scatter, chip or burn.  | Hand cut with loppers or use brush mower.   | Best control if cut is below the root-crown ball, about an inch below soil surface.                             |
|  | <b>Incense Cedar</b>   | Native             | Hand cut with loppers or use weed eater with brush blade. Chip or burn the pile.   | Hand cut with loppers or use brush mower.   | Limb mature trees up to 12 feet; don't prune more than 1/3 of the plant height.                                 |
|  | <b>Interior Live Oak</b>   | Native             | Prune main plant into the shape of a tree, focusing growth on one central branch or sprout. Lop branches. Scatter, chip or burn.   | Hand pull in moist soil. Hand cut with loppers or use weed eater with brush blade. Chip or burn the pile.                     | More fire-volatile than Black Oak.  |
|  | <b>Manzanita</b>   | Native             | Hand cut with loppers, masticate or use brush mower.   | Hand cut with loppers, use weed eater with brush blade or use brush mower.  | Goat grazing is not the most effective method.  |
|  | <b>Poison Oak</b>  | Native             | Hand-cut thick vines with loppers. Herbicide will discourage growth back. Weed eating does not discourage growth back. Rent goats to remove new growth or leaves; repeated goat grazing is required to decrease number of live plants. | Weed-eating does not discourage grow back; browse with goats.   | Handpiling and burning is not recommended. Repeated goat grazing is required to decrease number of live plants. |
|  | <b>Ponderosa Pine</b>  | Native             | Hand cut with loppers or use weed eater with brush blade. Chip or burn the pile.   | Hand cut with loppers or use weed eater with brush blade. Chip or burn the pile.  | Limb mature trees up to 12 feet; don't prune more than 1/3 of the plant height.                                 |
|  | <b>Scotch / French / Spanish Broom</b>                                   | Invasive           | Hand pull in moist soil using weed wrench.   | Hand pull in moist soil. Use herbicide (e.g. Roundup® or similar product). Check site for about six years for new seedlings.  | Best to pull or cut before plant goes to seed. The key to success is preventing the seeds from maturing.        |
|  | <b>Tan-bark Oak</b>  | Native             | Prune main plant into the shape of a tree, focusing growth on one central branch or sprout. Lop branches. Scatter, chip or burn.   | Hand cut with loppers, use weed eater with brush blade or use brush mower.  | More fire-volatile than Black Oak.  |
|  | <b>Tree of Heaven</b><br>"Chinese Sumac"<br>"Stinking Sumac"             | Invasive           | Herbicide discourages growth back. Handcutting alone isn't typically effective; it causes the plant to produce multiple stump sprouts and root suckers. Abundant seeds; target removal of female trees to reduce seed spread.          | Seedlings may be pulled or dug up, preferably when soil is moist. Remove the entire plant, including all roots and fragments. |   |