Why Plant Flammability is Important

During a bushfire, the type, amount and arrangement of vegetation is critically important for the survival of your house. The fuel for bushfires is the main danger factor that people can control. Hazard reduction activities such as clearing and fuel reduction burning, aim to lower the vegetation hazard to a safe level. Because some plants have a higher resistance to burning than others, we can use low flammability plants for added protection in addition to normal maintenance and hazard reduction activities.

There are two basic factors to be considered in determining a plant’s flammability: the first is how readily its parts burn and the second is how its parts burn and the second is how its parts are combined. There are many lots of plants in books but unfortunately most should be treated with suspicion because they haven’t been tested in an acceptable way. The trouble with a lot of the books is they don’t tell us which aspects of flammability are included and how they are combined.

Testing the flammability of individual pieces of plant is usually done by taking a section of leaf and subjecting it to a flame and measuring pieces of plant is usually done by Testing the flammability of individual they are combined.

The trouble with a lot of the books is they don’t tell us which aspects of flammability are included and how they are combined.

The Role of Replacement Planting

Fire retardant plants can absorb more of the heat of the approaching bushfire without burning than more flammable plants. They can trap burning embers and sparks and re-ignite vegetation. Hazard reduction activities such as clearing and fuel reduction burning, aim to lower the vegetation hazard to a safe level. Because some plants have a higher resistance to burning than others, we can use low flammability plants for added protection in addition to normal maintenance and hazard reduction activities.

There are two basic factors to be considered in determining a plant’s flammability: the first is how readily its parts burn and the second is how its parts are combined. There are many lots of plants in books but unfortunately most should be treated with suspicion because they haven’t been tested in an acceptable way. The trouble with a lot of the books is they don’t tell us which aspects of flammability are included and how they are combined.

Testing the flammability of individual pieces of plant is usually done by taking a section of leaf and subjecting it to a flame and measuring...
Fire resisting garden plants for the urban fringe and rural areas

Introduction
All vegetation will burn in a bushfire and pose a hazard to people in their homes. However, not all vegetation has the same flammability and there is great potential for people living in bushfire prone areas to reduce their fire hazard by changing the plants in their gardens.

Flammability Groups
In the following list E denotes an exotic plant, TN a plant native to Tasmania, AN a plant native to mainland Australia and X a known native to Tasmania, AN a plant native to mainland Australia.

High Flammability
These plants have been shown to be highly flammable and should not be planted or allowed to remain inside your house's Building Protection Zone. They should also be avoided in the Fuel Modified Zone. Move these plants away from your house and replace them with less flammable plants.

Moderate Flammability
These plants should be avoided in the Building Protection Zone. They should not be allowed to dominate your garden and should be well maintained, being especially careful to remove dead material before it accumulates.

Low Flammability
These plants are acceptable in the Building Protection Zone and will be valuable replacements for more flammable plants.

Text by Mark Chadil and Jennifer Sheridan. Photographs of selected plants by Alan Macdiayen, Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. Thanks to Natalia Papworth, Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens. Original research and publication supported by the Tasmanian Fire Research Fund. Revision 3, 2006.