

Eastview Patio Homes II Association, P. O. Box 300164, Escondido, CA 92030

OCTOBER 2008

Fire Safety Still On Our Minds

Let's admit it. We are all nervous about the remaining fire season with the threatening Santa Ana winds. No one wants a repeat of last October's devastating wildfires. While we can't control Mother Nature, we can take precautions to minimize damage and the ensuing disruption of our day-to-day lives.


If you attended the "Living With Wildfire" classes presented by RB United in July and August, you learned many ways—some very simple—to protect your home and property. Led by wildfire science expert Anne Fege, Ph.D., the team covered how fire spreads, the importance of healthy and appropriate landscaping, and helpful steps homeowners can take. An on-site class at various RB residences allowed instructors to point out common points of entry for embers and potential hazards with suggestions to lessen a home's vulnerability once the winds start blowing.

A point we cannot stress enough is the importance of replacing wooden shake roofs. Dave Bacon, a 30-year veteran with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection stated:

“If you have a shake roof, there is a 99% risk of your home burning down in a wildfire.”

He also stated that houses less than 15 feet apart are more likely to burn in clusters as we saw in Eastview and neighboring developments. Of the 14 homes that burned in Eastview, 13 either had shake roofs or were next to homes with shake roofs.

Landscape architect Kay Stewart warned that some vegetation created problems as well. If you have **Mexican fan palms**, please consider taking them out. Embers lodge in the husks of the trunk, smolder, and then ignite, sending fire into the air for up to three miles. Non-native **Pampas grass** (*Cortaderia*) and **arundo** (Giant Reed) are also dangerous as they burn very easily.

Things you can do, Page 2 

THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW TO PROTECT YOUR HOME

- Use fire-resistant wood on shade structures. Large pieces are slower to burn. Replace the small pieces on top.
- Have solid core exterior doors.
- Use double-pane windows with one side tempered glass.
- Make sure there is a good seal around the garage door to prevent embers from entering.
- Consider replacing old wooden garage doors.
- Use non-flammable material for fences attached to house for at least five feet.
- Install bird stoppers in tile roofs to prevent embers and firebrands from entering.
- **Replace wood shake roofs. Reduce your and your neighbors' vulnerability.**
- Install 1/4" or 1/8" screening in outside vents to block embers from entering attic.
- Clean out gutters. Consider gutter covers to keep gutters clean.
- Remove combustible material near home, e.g. woodpiles and landscaping bark.
- Prune bushes like trees. Keep them thinned out and free of dead branches and twigs.
- Keep tree limbs or palm fronds at least 10 feet away from chimney openings and eaves.
- Do not let limbs or fronds hang over roofs.
- Make sure vegetation is well-irrigated and trimmed at least five feet away from vents, eaves, decks, windows, and foundation.
- Consider boxing in open eaves.
- Close gaps anyplace where roof meets the wall.
- If fire is predicted, make sure gas is turned off to built-in BBQ or remove portable tanks at least 10 feet away from home. Put patio cushions inside house. Put flammable door mats inside.
- Close windows.
- If evacuation is necessary, unlock any gates as firefighters will not climb over gates.

We aren't fire experts, and we don't pretend to have all the answers to ensuring that our homes will survive another wildfire. This information is provided to help you assess risk. We are summarizing for your convenience just some of the information we learned at the wildfire seminars (from experts with nearly 100 years combined experience) plus steps you can take to be pro-active and safe. If you attended the "Living with Wildfire" classes, you received many valuable materials to assist you. The Fire Marshall can answer your questions as well as the experts with RB United (858-8502 or www.rbunited.com)

OTHER STEPS TO TAKE

- Keep valuable documents in a safety deposit box. Home safes generally cannot withstand the intense heat of fires.
- Update your insurance annually.
- Do a home inventory; take photos and keep in safe place.
- Have an escape plan. How will you let loved ones know you are all right?
- Let your neighbor know when and where you will be out of town. Leave a contact number.
- Keep your car's gas tank at least at 1/4 full.
- Mom was right. It's better to be safe than sorry.

A BEND IN THE ROAD IS NOT THE
END OF THE ROAD UNLESS YOU FAIL
TO TURN.

Comments or suggestions for the newsletter? If there is any information you would like to see covered in the newsletter, please contact Paula Taylor at 675-7042 or pataylor@san.rr.com.



LANDSCAPE REPORT

When you drive along Escala, please note that we have replaced 20 damaged pepper trees and added yellow honeysuckle bushes to complete the restoration of the fire-damaged area.

We removed 13 trees from a stand of 41 trees on Chretien Court to allow for healthier growth and spacing of the remaining trees.

Homes under construction and adjacent homes damaged by the fires will soon have their yards replaced upon completion of the majority (13) of the replacement homes. The first phase of this work should commence in an October-November timeframe. Drive- and walkways are in the process of being replaced.

Three years ago the Board implemented a slope maintenance program to ensure trees and shrubs were kept trimmed. In late Fall, we'll be trimming trees along the Escala slope between Devereux and Tezcuco. We will also trim four pines near the Escala/Devereux intersection as well as the slopes between Tretagnier, Rosedown, and Belle Helene.

This is the time of year when fire danger is heightened. Once more, please check your own landscaping to remove dead branches and other combustible vegetation. While the outside of shrubs may look green, the interior branches may be dry and need thinning out.

Ron Filson
Landscape Chairman

ARC GUIDELINES FOR GATES

If you are considering replacing your front gate, here's the procedure.

Patio II is over 20 years old and some of our residents are thinking about replacing their wrought iron gates. Also, we have 14 homes that are being rebuilt and all of them will need new gates, too. The Patio II Board asked ARC to consider adding decorative wrought iron gates to our community. The first decorative gate design was submitted at our last ARC meeting.

If you wish to replace your gate, fill out an ARC form and include a drawing using the guidelines below and submit it to the Community Center office. **All decorative gates must be approved by ARC prior to installation.**

GUIDELINES

- Front gates cannot be higher than 8 inches above adjacent side walls or fencing.
- Gates must be black.
- No pickets allowed.
- Decorative gate/fence designs are allowed but are not to be excessively ornate or elaborate.
- No initials or family crests.
- Screening placed on or attached to fences must be black.



SIGNS IN COMMON AREA

With the election just around the corner, we understand everyone wants to support his or her favorite candidate or cause. Please remember that no signs may be placed in the common area.

To report broken sprinklers, watering problems, or common area landscape concerns, call the Association landscaping contractor directly:

Vitale Landscape Maintenance
(619) 938-2432 or (619) 938-2435