Plant Selection Guidelines by Zone

Fuel Modification plant selection and location should focus on the density and arrangement of plants related to structures. Second, choose zone appropriate species based on plant characteristics such as moisture content, resin/pitch and the production of dead litter from leaves, bark, seed pods etc. The following guidelines are intended to simplify this process through zone specific compositions.

Zone A (30' from any qualifying structure or the property line whichever is first)

- Zone A should be planted "lean" and selections should consist of small herbaceous or succulent plants less than 2'-3' in height or regularly irrigated and mowed lawns.
- It is best not to use woody trees, shrubs and perennial species or masses of un-mowed grasses within 10 feet of the structure.
- Occasional accents of woody plants can be used sparingly to soften hard edges of structures if the selections are widely spaced and zone appropriate.
- Consider locating hardscape features such as walkways, patios, driveways, sport courts etc. adjacent to the structure itself. Potted plants can be used to soften walls if necessary.

Zone B (30'-100' from any qualifying structure)

- Zone B can be planted with a slightly higher density than Zone A. However, care should be taken not to create horizontal or vertical fuel ladders (see basic fire behavior graphics).
- Screen plantings can be used to hide unsightly views. Hedging is discouraged as it promotes the accumulation of dead litter inside the live hedge.
- Zone B is the ideal location to introduce larger shade trees provided they are zone appropriate and the canopies are not continuous.
- Avoid planting woody plant species larger than 3' at maturity directly beneath any tree canopy.

Zone C (100'-200' from any qualifying structure)

- Zone C often is not landscaped on many projects but is still subject to hazard reduction requirements (brush clearance). Do not denude the property.
  http://www.readyforwildfire.org/
- If Zone C is to be landscaped, avoid increasing plant density beyond guidelines for Zone B.

Adjacent to Access Roads

- Maintain Fire Access roads with a 20' wide path that remains clear to the sky.

Fuel Ladders/Basic Fire Behavior

Before selecting and locating plants on a Fuel Modification plan a basic understanding of wildland fire behavior is the key factor in properly arranging plants. Eliminating and avoiding the creation of fuel ladders should be the chief concern. Understanding that anything planted in the landscape can become receptive fuel for wildfire: the way it is arranged and maintained will greatly influence fire intensity. The following diagrams will aide in arranging plant compositions wisely.
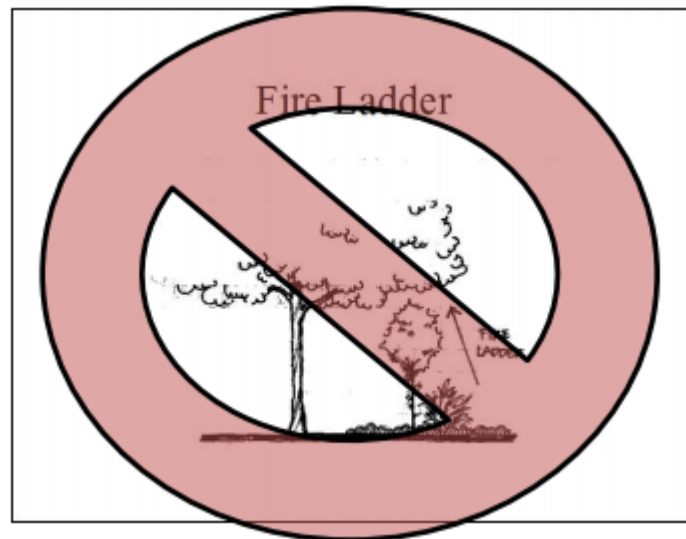

Figure 1: Fire Ladders or Fuel Ladders should be eliminated. The diagram above illustrates what not to do.

Figure 2: Eliminate the vertical and horizontal continuity. This is a good example of adequate separation.
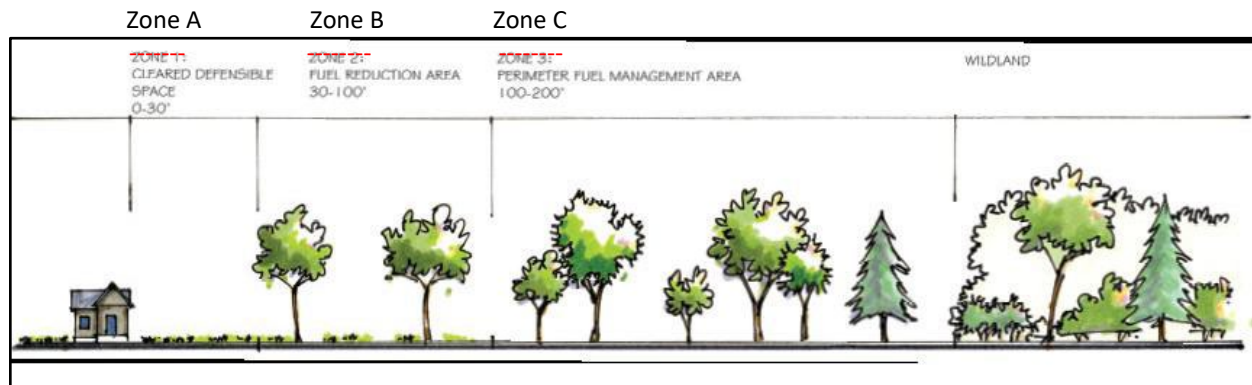
Zone A	Zone B	Zone C

Figure 3: Note the progressive increase in density and arrangement moving away from the structure.

Plant Placement Do's

- Do: use "mass plantings" or herbaceous/succulents as ground covers even if they are not traditionally used as such. Mass plantings if properly selected, can eliminate fuel ladders.
- Do: plant using spacing resulting in near complete coverage at maturity.
- Do: consider using patio trees as an informal screen in Zone A.
- Do: consider vines as an alternative to hedges on walls or fences 10' from structures.
- Do: select varieties of plants that are slower growing and reach manageable sizes at maturity.
- Do: use plants that are appropriately scaled to the size of the property and structure. A single story house does not need to be shaded by a 100' tall Sweetgum.

Plant Placement Don'ts

- Don't plant hedges directly against structures. This includes espaliers of large shrubs not allowed in Zone A, or hedges taller than 6 feet or within 10' of the structure.
- Don't plant large shrubs and trees in continuous lines or large masses in Zones A or B.
- Don't plant at densities that result in an "instant landscape."
- Don't plant large species and use pruning to reduce overall size.
- Don't plant vines on structures. Vines become receptive fuel beds for embers (fire brands).
- Don't assume any plant is "fire proof." All plants will burn and assuming a plant is ignition resistant can be very misleading.
- Don't use large woody species in mass plantings.

Acceptable Plant Selections for Fuel Modification

The provided plant list is intended as a representative sample of plants appropriate for each zone, considering size, moisture content, leaf litter production and chemical composition. This list is not comprehensive, and designers may choose plants not on the list if plant characteristics are zone appropriate. Selecting regionally appropriate plants considering climate and microclimate adaptability is the designer's responsibility.

Undesirable Plants/Target Species

Plants listed below are not allowed as part of an approved Fuel Modification Plan. In addition to this list, designers should avoid planting known invasive plants such as Pampas grass and Hottentot Fig. If there are questions, please reference the California Invasive Plant Council.
http://www.cal-ipc.org/

*This list is not inclusive and some cultivars (dwarf etc.) within the genus listed may be acceptable.

Adenostoma fasciculatum – Chamise

Adenostoma sparsifolium – Red Shank

Artemesia californica – California Sagebrush

Eriogonum fasciculatum – Common Buckwheat

Cortaderia spp. – Pampas Grass

Cupressus spp. – Cypress

Eucalyptus spp – Eucalyptus

Jasminum humile – Italian Jasmine

Plumbago auriculata – Cape Plumbago

Tecoma capensis – Cape Honeysuckle

Example plant selections by zone begin on the next page.

Fuel Modification Plant List

Botanical Name	Common Name	Zone	Minimum distance from structure
Ground Cover			
Acacia redolens 'Desert Carpet'/'Low Boy'	Desert Carpet Acacia	B	30
Achillea tomentosa	Woolly Yarrow	A	
Ajuga reptans	Carpet Bugle	A	
Arctostaphylos (Prostrate Varieties)	Manzanita	B	
Artemisia californica (Cultivars)	Sagebrush - Prostrate Forms	B	30
Artemesia 'Powis Castle'	NCN	B	
Baccharis pilularis 'Pigeon Point'/'Twin Peaks'	Prostrate Coyote Brush	B	
Campanula poscharkyana	Serbian Bellflower	A	
Ceanothus gloriosus	Point Reyes Ceanothus	B	
Cerastium tomentosum	Snow-In-Summer	A	
Chamaemelum nobile	Chamomile	A	
Cistus salviifolius 'Prostratus'	Sageleaf Rockrose	B	
Coprosma kirkii	Mirror Plant	B	
Coreopsis auriculata 'Nana'	Tickseed	A	
Cotoneaster (Prostrate Varieties)	Cotoneaster	B	
Dalea greggii	Trailing Indigo Bush	B	
Delosperma alba	White Training Ice Plant	A	
Dichondra micrantha	Dichondra	A	
Drosanthemum floribundum	Rosea Ice Plant	A	
Duchesnea indica	Indian Mock Strawberry	A	
Dymondia margaretae	NCN	A	
Erigeron glaucus	Seaside Daisy	A	
E. karvinskianus	Santa Barbara Daisy	B	
Euonymus fortunei 'Colorata'	Purple-Leaf Winter Creeper	B	
Festuca cinerea(ovina'Glauca')	Blue Fescue	A	
F. rubra	Red Fescue	A	
Fragaria chiloensis	Wild Strawberry	A	
Gazania Hybrids	Trailing Gazania	A	
Geranium incanum/sanguineum	Cranesbill	A	
Glechoma hederacea	Ground Ivy	A	
Helianthemum nummularium	Sunrose	A	
Herniaria glabra	Green Carpet	A	
Heuchera species and Cultivars	Coral Bells	A	
Hypericum calycinum/coris	Aaron's Beard	B	
Iberis sempervirens	Evergreen Candytuft	A	
Iva hayesiana	Poverty Weed	B	30
Juniperus (Prostrate species/cultivars)		B	
Laurentia fluviatilis	Blue Star Creeper	A	
Lysimachia nummularia	Moneywort	A	
Liriope spicata	Creeping Lily Turf	A	

Liriope muscari	Lily Turf	A	
Mahonia repens	Creeping Mahonia	B	
Myoporum 'Pacificum' & 'Putah Creek'	Pacific Myoporum	B	
M. parvifolium	NCN	A	
Oenothera berlandieri	Mexican Evening Primrose	B	
O. stubbei	Baja Evening Primrose	A	
Ophiopogon japonicus	Mondo Grass	A	
Pachysandra terminalis	Japanese Spurge	A	
Pelargonium peltatum/tomentosum	Ivy Geranium	A	
Persicaria capitata	Pink Clover	A	
Phlox subulata	Moss Pink	A	10
Phyla nodiflora (Lippia repens)	Lippia	A	
Potentilla tabernaemontanii	Spring Cinquefoil	A	
Ribes viburnifolium	Catalina Perfume	B	
Rosmarinus officinalis (Prostrate Varieties)	Prostrate Rosemary	B	30
Scaevola 'Mauve Clusters'	NCN	A	
Salvia sonomensis	Creeping Sage	B	
Sedum species	Stonecrops	A	
Senecio mandraliscae/serpens	Kleinia/Blue Chalksticks	A	
Soleirolia soleirolii	Baby's Tears	A	
Teucrium cossonii majoricum	Germander	A	
T. X lucidrys 'Prostratum'	Prostrate Germander	A	
Thymus species	Mother of Thyme	A	
Trachelospermum jasminoides	Star Jasmine	A	
Trifolium fragiferum	White Clover	A	
Verbena species (Prostrate Variteis)	Garden Verbena	A	
Vinca minor	Dwarf Periwinkle	A	
Viola odorata	Sweet Violet	A	
Wedelia trilobata	Yellow Dot	B	
Zoysia tenuifolia	Korean Grass	A	
Miscellaneous Perennials, Grasses, Ferns etc.			
Acorous gramineous and Cultivars	Sweet Flag	A	
Agapanthus africanus	Lily of the Nile	A	
Alstroemeria cooperi	Peruvian Lily	A	
Armeria species	Thrifts	A	
Bamboos	Bamboo	B	30
Bergenia cordifolia	Heart Leaf Bergenia	A	
Cycas species	Cycads	A	
Cyrtomium falcatum	Holly Fern	A	
Davalia tricomanoides	Rabbits Foot Fern	A	
Epilobium canum	California Fuchia	B	
Helictotrichon sempervirens	Blue Oat Grass	A	15
Hemerocallis hybrids	Daylily	A	
Iris douglassiana	Coastal Iris	A	
Iris germanica	Bearded Iris	A	

Kalanchoe species	Kalanchoe	A	
Leymus condensatus 'Canyon Prince'	Canyon Prince Wild Rye	B	
Lobelia laxiflora		A	10
Pelargonium species	Geranium	A	
Penstemon species	Beard Tongue	A	
Plumeria	Plumeria	A	
Phlebodium aureum	Rabbits Foot Fern	A	
Tulbaghia violacea	Society Garlic	A	
Zephyranthes candida	Zephyr Lily	A	
Shrubs			
Abelia grandiflora (Prostrata)	Glossy Abelia	A	10
Abutilon hybridum	Flowering Maple	A	10
Acanthus mollis	Bear's Breech	A	
Agave species	Agave	A	
Aloe species	Aloe	A	
Alyogyne huegelii	Blue Hibiscus	A	10
Arbutus unedo (Dwarf Cultivars)	Dwarf Strawberry Tree	A	10
Arctostaphylos species	Manzanita	B	
Aucuba japonica	Japanese Aucuba	A	
Baccharis species	Various	B	
Berberis thunbergii	Japanese Barberry	B	
B. thunbergii ' prostrate cultivars'		A	10
Bougainvillea sp.	Bougainvillea	B	
Buddleja davidii	Butterfly Bush	B	
Buxus microphylla japonica	Japanese Boxwood	A	10
Caesalpinia (Shrub Forms)	Bird of Paradise Bush	A	10
Camellia species	Camellia	A	10
Calliandra californica/eriophylla	Baja Fairy Duster	B	
Callistemon citrinus	Lemon Bottlebrush	B	
C. viminalis "Little John"	NCN	A	10
Calycanthus occidentalis	Western Spice Bush	B	
Carissa macrocarpa and Cultivars	Natal Plum	A	10
Carpenteria californica	Bush Anemone	A	10
Cassia artemisioides	Feathery Cassia	A	30
Ceanothus species	Wild Lilac	B	30
Cercocarpus betuiloides	Mountain Mahogany	B	30
Choisya ternata	Mexican orange	B	
Cistus species	Rockrose	B	
Comarostaphylis diversifolia	Summer Holly	B	
Convolvulus cneorum	Bush Morning Glory	B	
Coprosma pumila/repens	Mirror Plant	B	
Cotoneaster species & cultivars	Cotoneaster	B	
Crassula species	NCN	A	
Cuphea hyssopifolia	False Heather	A	
Cycas revoluta	Sago Palm	A	

Dasylirion quadrangulatum/wheeleri	Mexican Grass Tree	A	10
Dendromecon harfordii	Island Bush Poppy	B	
Dietes bicolor/irioides	Fortnight Lily	A	
Dodonaea viscosa (Purpurea)	Hopseed Bush	B	
Elaeagnus pungens & cultivars	Silverberry	B	
Encelia californica	Coast Sunflower	A	10
E. farinosa	Brittle Bush	B	
Erigonum giganteum	St. Catherine's Lace	B	
Escallonia species	Escallonia	A	10
Euonymus japonica & cultivars	Evergreen Euonymus	A	10
Euphorbia species		A	
Euryops pectinatus	NCN	A	
Fatsia japonica	Japanese Aralia	A	
Fouquieria splendens	Ocotillo	A	
Fremontodendron species & cultivars	Flannel Bush	B	
Gardenia jasminoides	Gardenia	A	
Garrya elliptica	Coast Silktassel	B	
Grevillea species & cultivars	Grevillea	B	
Grewia occidentalis	Lavender Starflower	B	
Hakea suaveolens	Sweet Hakea	B	
Hebe species & cultivars	Hebe	A	10
Hesperaloe parviflora	Red Yucca	A	
Hibiscus rosa - sinensis	Chinese Hibiscus	A	10
Ilex species	Holly	B	
Juniperus species	Juniper	B	
Justicia brandegeana	Shrimp Plant	A	10
J. californica	Chuparosa	B	
Keckiella cordifolia	Heart-Leaved Penstemon	B	
Kniphofia uvaria	Red-Hot Poker	A	
Lantana Camara & hybrids	Lantana	A	10
Larrea tridentata	Creosote Bush	B	
Lavandula species	Lavender	A	10
Lavatera assurgentiflora/maritima	California Tree Mallow	B	
Leonotis leonrus	Lion's Tail	B	
Leptospermum scoparium & varities	New Zealand Tea Tree	B	
Leucophyllum species		B	
Ligustrum japonicum	Wax-leaf Privet	A	10
Lupinus species	Lupine	B	
Mahonia aquifolium ('Compacta')	Oregon Grape	A	10
M. fremontii	Desert Mahonia	B	
M. 'Golden Abundance'	NCN	B	
M. lomariifolia	Venetian Blind Mahonia	A	
Malosma - See Rhus			
Malva species	Mallow	A	10
Melaleuca nesophila	Pink Melaleuca	A	10
Mimulus species (Diplacus)	Monkey Flower	A	10
Myrica californica	Pacific Wax Myrtle	B	

Myrsine africana	African Boxwood	A	10
Myrtus communis 'Compacta'	Dwarf Myrtle	A	10
Nandina domestica (including dwarf varieties)	Heavenly Bamboo	A	
Nerium oleander	Oleander	B	
N.o. 'Petite Salmon'	NCN	A	10
Opuntia species	Prickly Pear, Cholla etc.	A	
Phlomis fruticosa	Jerusalem Sage	A	
Phoenix roebelenii	Pygmy Date Palm	A	
Phormium tenax and Cultivars	New Zealand Flax	A	
Photinia fraseri	Photinia	B	
Pittosporum tobira ('Variegata')	Tobira	B	
P.t.'Wheeler's Dwarf'	Dwarf Pittosporum	A	
Punica granatum 'Nana'	Dwarf Pomegranate	A	10
Prunus ilicifolia	Hollyleaf Cherry	B	
Pyracantha species	Firethorn	B	
Rhamnus california/crocea	Coffeeberry	B	
Rhaphiolepis indica and Cultivars	India Hawthorn	A	10
Rhus integrifolia/laurina	Lemonade Berry	B	40
R. ovata	Sugar Bush	B	30
Ribes species	Currant/Gooseberry	A	10
Romneya coulteri	Matilija Poppy	B	
Rosa species (except R. californica)	Rose	A	
Rosmarinus officinalis & cultivars	Rosemary	B	
Salvia species - native varieties	Sage	B	
S. greggii/leucantha	Autumn Sage	A	10
Santolina chamaecyparissus/rosmarinifolius	Lavender Cotton	A	10
Simmondsia chinensis	Jojoba	B	
Strelitzia nicolai/regina	Bird of Paradise	A	
Tagetes lemmonii	Copper Canyon Daisy	B	
Tibouchina urvilleana	Princess Flower	A	10
Trichostema lanatum	Wooly Blue Curls	B	
Viburnum species	Viburnum	A	10
Westringia fruticosa	Coast Rosemary	A	10
Xylosma congestum	Shiny Xylosma	B	
X.c. 'Compacta'	Compact Xylosma	A	10
Yucca species	Yucca	B	
Trees			
Acacia farnesiana	Sweet Acacia	A	15
A. greggii	Catclaw Acacia	B	
A. salicina	Willow Acacia	A	15
A. smallii	NCN	A	15
A. stenophylla	Shoestring Acacia	A	15
Acer negundo	Box Elder	B	
A. palmatum	Japanese Maple	A	
A. saccharinum	Silver Maple	B	30

Aesculus californica	California Buckeye	B	
Agonis flexuosa	Peppermint Tree	B	
Albizia julibrissin	Silk Tree	B	
Alnus rhombifolia	Alder	B	
Arbutus unedo ('Marina')	Strawberry Tree	A	15
Archontophoenix cunninghamiana	King Palm	A	
Bauhinia variegata	Purple Orchid Tree	B	
Betula pendula	European White Birch	A	10
Brachychiton acerifolius/populneus	Flame Tree/Bottle Tree	B	
Brahea armata/edulis	Blue Hesper Palm	A	10
Butia capitata	Pindo Palm	A	10
Callistemon citrinus	Lemon Bottlebrush	B	
C. viminalis	Weeping Bottlebrush	A	15
Calocedrus decurrens	Incense Cedar	B	
Calodendrum capense	Cape Chestnut	B	
Cedrus deodara	Deodar Cedar	B	30
Ceratonia siliqua	Carob	B	30
Cercidium floridum/microphyllum	Blue Palo Verde	A	
Cercis occidentalis/canadensis	Western Redbud	A	10
Chamaerops humilis	Mediterranean Fan Palm	A	10
Chilopsis linearis	Desert Willow	A	15
Chionanthus retusus	Chinese Fringe Tree	A	10
Chitalpa X tashkentensis	Chitalpa	A	10
Chorisia speciosa	Floss Silk Tree	B	
Cinnamomum camphora	Camphor Tree	B	30
Citrus species	Citrus	A	10
Cocculus laurifolius	Laurel Leaf Snail Seed	B	
Cordyline australis	Giant Dracaena	A	
Cyathea cooperi	Australian Tree Fern	A	
Dicksonia antarctica	Tazmanian Tree Fern	A	
Dracaena draco	Dragon Tree	A	
Eriobotrya deflexa/japonica	Bronze Loquat/Loquat	A	10
Erythrina species	Coral Tree	B	
Feijoa sellowiana	Pineapple Guava	A	10
Ficus species	Fig	B	50
Fraxinus species	Ash	B	30
Geijera parviflora	Australian Willow	A	15
Ginkgo biloba	Maidenhair Tree	A	15
Gleditsia triacanthos	Honey Locust	A	15
Grevillea robusta	Silk Oak	B	
Heteromeles arbutifolia	Toyon	A	15
Hymenosporum flavum	Sweetshade Tree	A	15
Jacaranda mimosifolia	Jacaranda	B	
Juglans californica	Black Walnut	B	
Koelreuteria bipinnata/paniculata	Chinese Flame Tree	B	
Lagerstroemia indica	Crape Myrtle	A	10
Laurus nobilis	Sweet Bay	B	

Leptospermum laevigatum	Australian Tea Tree	A	15
Liquidambar formosana	Chinese Sweet Gum	A	15
L. styraciflua	American Sweet Gum	B	
Liriodendron tulipfera	Tulip Tree	B	
Lithocarpus densiflorus	Tanbark Oak	B	
Lophpstemon confertus (Tristania)	Brisbane Box	A	15
Lyonothamnus floribundus	Catalina Ironwood	A	15
Magnolia grandiflora	Southern Magnolia	B	
M. X soulangeana	Saucer Magnolia	A	10
Maytenus boaria	Mayten Tree	A	10
Melaleuca quinquenervia	Cajeput Tree	A	15
Metasequoia glypstroboides	Dawn Redwood	A	15
Metrosideros excelsus	New Zealand Christmas Tree	A	10
Morus alba	White Mulberry	B	
Olea europea	Olive - Fruitless only	A	15
Parkinsonia aculeata	Jerusalem Thorn	A	10
Phoenix dactylifera	Date Palm	B	
Pinus species	Pine	B	75
Pistacia chinensis	Chinese Pistache	B	
Pittosporum phillyraeoides	Willow Pittosporum	A	10
P. rhombifolium	Queensland Pittosporum	B	
Platanus racemosa	California Sycamore	B	
Podocarpus gracilior/macrophyllus	Fern Pine/Yew Pine	B	
Populus fremontii	Fremont Cottonwood	B	
Prosopis chilensis	Chilean Mesquite	B	
P. glandulosa	Honey Mesquite	A	15
Prunus cerasifera 'Atropurpurea'	Purple-leaf Plum	A	10
Punica granatum	Pomegranate	B	
Pyrus calleryana/kawakamii	Ornamental Pear	A	15
Quercus species	Oak	B	30
Rhus lancea	African Sumac	B	
Robinia ambigua	Locust	B	
Sapium sebiferum	Chinese Tallow Tree	B	
Schefflera actinophylla	Queensland Unbrella Tree	A	
Sophora japonica	Japanese Pagoda Tree	B	
Stenocarpus sinuatus	Firewheel Tree	A	10
Syagrus romanzoffianum	Queen Palm	A	
Tabebuia species	Trumpet Tree	A	15
Tipuana tipu	Tipu Tree	B	
Tupidanthus calyptratus	Tupidanthus	A	
Trachycarpus fortunei	Windmill Palm	A	
Umbellularia californica	California Bay	B	
Washingtonia filifera	California Fan Palm	B	30
Zelkova serrata	Sawleaf Zelkova	B	