

Establishing an Effective 'Asset Protection Zone' FACT SHEET

QUICK FACTS

What is an APZ?

An APZ is a fuel reduced area surrounding a building or an asset of value whether residential, commercial, industrial or environmental. 'Fuel reduced' means a reduction in the available vegetation or other items that may burn sufficient to reduce the impact of a bush fire on your home or other assets of value.

How wide does an APZ need to be?

The minimum width required for an APZ around your property is 20m. This may increase in circumstances where your property is on sloping land. If you are unsure if your APZ should be greater than 20m contact your local Shire office.

How will an APZ help in the event of a fire?

An APZ between the bush and your property will reduce the risk of your house and/or assets being damaged or destroyed by direct flame or the intense heat that is given off during a fire.

An APZ can also reduce the likelihood of hot (embers that can be carried in the wind during a fire) from igniting items that can burn on or around your home and/or assets. Additionally a well maintained APZ can provide a safer and more accessible area you and/or firefighters to defend your property.

Creating and maintaining an Asset Protection Zone (APZ) is one of the most effective things you can do to reduce your risk in a bush fire.

Do I have to clear everything within 20m of my house and/or assets?

NO. Creating an effective APZ does not mean that you have to remove all vegetation within a distance of 20m from around your property. An effective APZ reduces the risk of the impact in the event of a fire by employing a few simple but effective steps which allow you (the property owner) to still maintain a visually appealing landscape around your property.

MAINTAINING YOUR GARDEN

The following guidelines have been set out by the WA State Government for property owners which specify recommendations for the spacing and height of vegetation. Small variations in spacing and height will occur dependent upon the type of plants you have, your exposure to the wind and the slope of your property. Refer to Figure 1 (overleaf) for a visual guide.

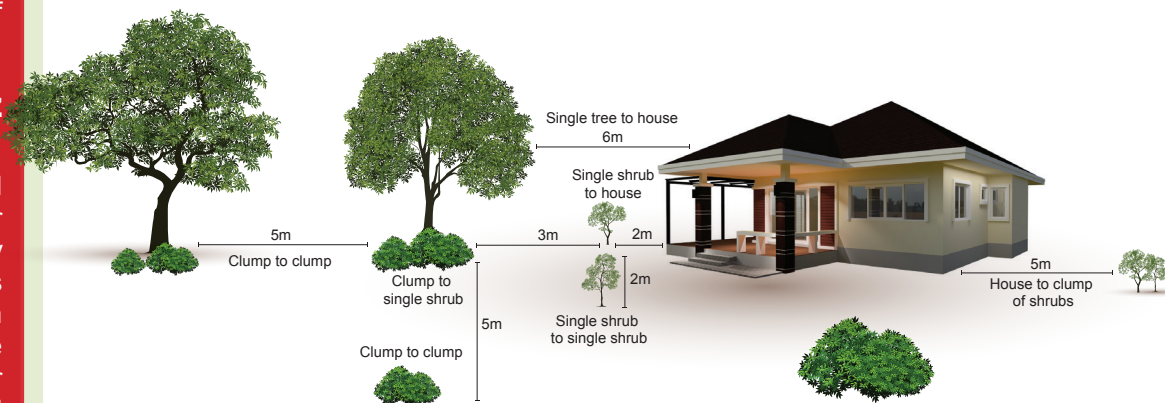


Figure 1: APZ - Vegetation Separation Distances

- Under the right conditions any vegetation will burn but some types of plants are less flammable than others. Nurseries can provide advice on fire resistant plants or ground covers
- Individual shrubs (0.5m - 5m in height) should not be located within 2m of buildings or be planted in clumps greater than 5m².
- Allow a 5m gap between clumps of shrubs and any assets
- Allow a 3m gap between clumps of shrubs and individual shrubs
- To reduce the risk of damage from direct flame or heat given off allow a 2m gap between individual shrubs
- Shrubs should have dead leaves and twigs, etc. pruned out of crowns
- Gardens, paths and open spaces such as entertainment areas, pools, vegetable patches and lawns can be used effectively to provide a break between areas of vegetation and reduce the chance of fire spreading
- Mulched garden beds should be kept away from vulnerable parts of buildings such as windows (which can crack when exposed to heat and let a fire into property), doors and decking
- Use pots and containers for plants that will not burn in a fire or can be moved away from buildings during a fire
- Native grass should be maintained to a height no greater than 50mm during the restricted burning season
- Lawns should be kept short and green where possible

MAINTAINING YOUR TREES

- Ideally trees should not be within the APZ but where they are present the canopies should be at least 6m away from a building
- Tree branches must not extend over the roofline or touch any part of a building
- Lower branches should be pruned to a height of 2m from the ground to minimize the risk of fire travelling up the tree into the canopy
- Trees should have a minimum of a 3-5m gap between each other and branches should not be allowed to overlap
- Smooth-barked trees are preferred to those with stringy, fibrous or ribbon bark which can help carry a fire into the tree canopy
- Shrubs greater than 5m in height should be treated as trees
- Where individual plants or shrubs are planted near or under trees, apply the 1:2 rule. If the shrub is 1m high ensure there is a minimum 2m gap between the top of the shrub and the foliage of the tree i.e. double the distance
- Where clumps of plants or shrubs are planted near or under trees, apply the 1:3 rule. If a patch of shrubs is 1m high ensure there is a minimum 3m gap between the top of the shrub and the foliage of the tree i.e. three times the distance.

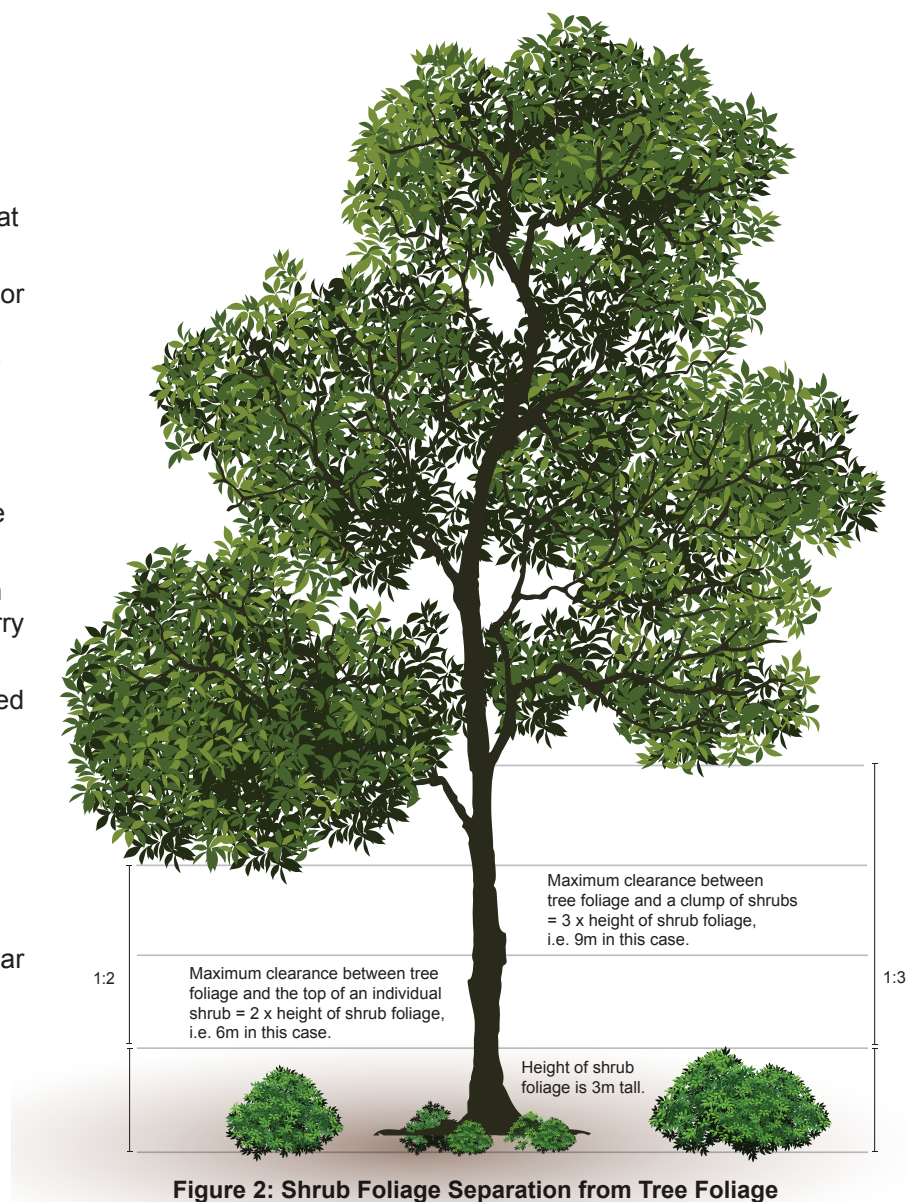


Figure 2: Shrub Foliage Separation from Tree Foliage

FINE FUEL MANAGEMENT

Any fine fuels on the ground that burn easily, such as dead leaves and twigs, should be kept below 6mm in depth and kept away from around the bottoms of trees, leading up to gardens or up against the side of buildings.

OTHER COMBUSTIBLE OBJECTS

- Any items within 10m of a building that may easily catch alight should not be located next to vulnerable parts of the building i.e. not located next to windows, doors, wooden wall paneling or decking, etc.
- Ideally fences should not be present within the APZ. Where necessary they should be constructed of materials that will not burn
- Sheds and other structures should be located at least 6m from your house
- Wood stacks, timber and rubbish and anything else that might burn should not be stored next to a house.

Further information on 'Asset Protection Zones' is available from:



Department of **Planning,
Lands and Heritage**



www.dplh.wa.gov.au

www.dfes.wa.gov.au



Administration Centre & Council Chambers
7 Brockman Street
GINGIN WA 6503
T: 9575 5100

Lancelin Office
255 Vins Way
LANCIELIN WA 6044
T: 9575 5155

E: mail@gingin.wa.gov.au
W: www.gingin.wa.gov.au

