



## Redlands Fire Demonstration Garden

### Full Mitigation Best Practice Story

#### *San Bernardino County, California*



**Redlands, CA** - Residents of the urban-wildland interface, an area that encompasses more than a third of the city of Redlands, have a place to go where they can learn how to modify vegetation at their homes and use fire-resistant materials to make their homes fire safe. Since 1992, Redlands has participated in disaster recovery efforts related to seven different Federally declared disasters, including five major floods, an earthquake, and a wildland fire.

Bolstered by grants from FEMA and the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) totaling more than \$217,000, the city of 60,000 residents implemented a threefold plan to lessen menacing impacts of natural disasters.

Included in the plan is a fire demonstration garden, one of five in California that graphically and three-dimensionally shows how defensible space landscaping around structures in an urban-wildland interface area can save homes. The Redlands Fire Demonstration Garden is the result of a partnership between public agencies and private businesses. Donations of materials and labor from private businesses to establish the garden was combined with the \$67,000 of the total Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) grant.

The garden is designed to show homeowners how fire-resistant landscaping may save their homes in the event of a wildfire while also helping to lessen or prevent erosion. Garden exhibits include a model home constructed of ignition-resistant materials and recommended fire-resistant plant materials. Handouts showing examples of cost-effective and fire-safe principals in home design and construction are made available to visitors who can follow a winding pathway through the garden, which features a 4-zone planting strategy that involves a variety of fire-resistant plants. Exterior walls and the roof of the model home demonstrate mitigation measures, including fireproof roofing and siding materials, spark arrestors, screens designed to keep flying embers from entering structures, and hardening of eaves with fireproof materials. "Bird stops" are added to the ends of the tiles, to demonstrate effectively preventing the birds from stuffing combustible materials in the roof. The garden also illustrates how to create "defensible space" around structures—space where firefighters can fight fires more safely while protecting homes.

Many people in the fire-risk areas of Redlands have used the garden as a model, taking home the ideas shown there and making their homes fire safe. Through the city's Firesafe 2000 program, funded by a separate \$150,000 FEMA/OES mitigation grant, the city provided funds for 38 single-family dwellings and a separate 10-home project. Homeowners each received \$3,000 to pay for getting rid of excess and fire-prone vegetation, and for installing irrigation systems and revegetation with fire-safe plants, in a program administered and monitored by Temby.

Many people from outside the Redlands area have visited the garden, explains Leonard Temby, the city's fire marshal and coordinator of the fire demonstration garden. Vegetation shown is not specific just to Redlands, but types of plants that could be incorporated into fire-safe revegetation anywhere in Southern California. "People find out that fire plantings don't have to be ugly," said Temby.

### Activity/Project Location

Geographical Area: **Single County in a State**

FEMA Region: **Region IX**

State: **California**

County: **San Bernardino County**

City/Community: **Redlands**

### Key Activity/Project Information

Sector: **Public**

Hazard Type: **Wildfire**

Activity/Project Type: **Education/Outreach/Public Awareness**

Activity/Project Start Date: **02/1997**

Activity/Project End Date: **Ongoing**

Funding Source: **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)**

Funding Recipient: **Local Government**

Funding Recipient Name: **City of Redlands**

### Activity/Project Economic Analysis

Cost: **\$67,000.00 (Estimated)**

### Activity/Project Disaster Information

Mitigation Resulted From Federal  
Disaster? **No**

Value Tested By Disaster? **No**

Repetitive Loss Property? **Unknown**

### Reference URLs

Reference URL 1: <http://www.wildfirenews.com/>

Reference URL 2: <http://www.oes.ca.gov/Operational/OESHome.nsf/1?OpenForm>

## Main Points

- The Demonstration Garden is the result of a partnership between public agencies and private businesses.
- The garden is an on-going public education activity.
- The firesafe practices are demonstrated for both structural materials and landscaping materials.
- There is no cost to visit the garden.



Model home built with fire resistant materials is on permanent display at the Redlands Fire Demonstration Garden.



The Fire Demonstration Garden is a permanent outdoor display and educational venue. The plant materials are fire resistant and organized for fire zone