

City of Whitehorse

Recommended Tree Species

Revised 2023



When landscaping your property, there are many factors to consider, including aesthetics, hardiness, maintenance, sightlines, safety, cost, and shelter from wind and sun. This guidelines includes only trees. For smaller woody plants (shrubs), similar considerations apply. The recommendations here include both **species and placement**. They are intended to comply with FireSmart Canada guidance as well as Winter Cities principles. FireSmart Canada guides homeowners to maintain a non-combustible area of 1.5 metres around the home and outbuildings (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: FireSmart Canada Home Ignition Zones guide

HOME IGNITION ZONE

EXTENDED ZONE
10m to 30m

INTERMEDIATE ZONE
1.5m to 10m

IMMEDIATE ZONE
0m to 1.5m

FireSmart
Canada

THERE ARE MANY FACTORS THAT MAY IMPACT YOUR PROPERTY'S RISK TO WILDFIRE
Check out the *FireSmart Begins at Home* Guide for an in-depth look at how you can build wildfire resiliency.

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| <p>IMMEDIATE ZONE 0m to 1.5m</p> | <p>The Immediate Zone is a non-combustible area that starts at the house and extends to a 1.5 metre perimeter around the home and attached structures, including decks. Reduce the chance of wind-blown embers igniting your home by starting with these proactive steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose non-combustible building materials when constructing or renovating your home. Clear vegetation and combustible material down to mineral soil and cover with non-combustible materials like gravel, brick, or concrete. Avoid planting woody shrubs or trees. If any are present, prune and maintain them regularly. |
| <p>INTERMEDIATE ZONE 1.5m to 10m</p> | <p>Elements in the Intermediate Zone are managed so they don't transmit fire to your home. Here are a few actions you can take to reduce your home's vulnerability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant fire-resistant vegetation and select non-combustible landscaping materials. Avoid incorporating any woody debris, including mulch. Keep combustible items like firewood piles, construction materials, patio furniture, tools, and decorative pieces out of this zone. Move trailers, recreational vehicles, storage sheds, and other combustible structures into the Extended Zone. If that is not possible, store firewood inside your mitigated garage, shed, or other ember-resistant structures. Create a non-combustible ground cover, like a gravel pad, underneath and 1.5 metres around trailers, recreational vehicles, and sheds. |
| <p>EXTENDED ZONE 10m to 30m</p> | <p>The goal in the Extended Zone is not to eliminate fire, but to reduce its intensity. If your property extends into this zone, a few important steps you can take include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selectively remove evergreen trees to create at least 3 metres of horizontal space between the single or grouped tree crowns. Remove all branches to a height of 2 metres from the ground. Regularly clean up accumulations of fallen branches, dry grass, and needles to eliminate potential surface fuels. Continue to apply these principles if your property extends beyond 30m. Work with your neighbours in overlapping zones and seek guidance of a forest professional if affected by other conditions, like steep slopes. |

Get started on your FireSmart journey!
WWW.FIRESMARTCANADA.CA

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Further resources can be found on the web at <https://firesmartcanada.ca/>. FireSmart in BC also has a useful landscaping guidance on species and placement that include Yukon plant hardiness zones. It can be found at https://firesmartbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/FireSmartBC_LandscapingGuide_Web_v2.pdf

DECIDUOUS TREES

POPLAR / ASPEN

Populus Species

Populus X (brooks)

Brooks #6 Poplar

Male Seedless Clone
Good Ornamental
Hardy hybrid
Dry Site
Height 20m / Spread 15m
Yellow fall colour
Zone 1

Populus X (northwind)

Northwest Poplar

Hardy Hybrid
Fast growing
Green foliage
Gold fall colour
Height 20m / Spread 15m
Zone 1

Populus tremuloides

Trembling Aspen

Native
Fast growing
Slender graceful tree with trembling leaves
White smooth powdery bark with black branch scarring
Excellent reclamation tree
Dry site
Gold fall colour
Height 15m / Spread 5m
Zone 1

Populus balsamifera

Balsam Poplar (Black Cottonwood, Western)

Tall broad-leaved tree
Pistillate catkins produced
Large quantities of fluff

Likes rich bottom land
Gold Fall Colour
Height 25m / Spread 10m
Zone 1

ALDER

Alnus Species

Alnus tenuifolia

Mountain Alder

Native
Mid sized tree / shrub
Green shiny leaves
Yellow / Orange fall colour
Reddish / Brown bark
Small ornamental cones over winter
Fast growing
Nitrogen fixing
Excellent reclamation species
Height 12m / Spread 4m
Maintain moisture
Zone 1

Alnus crispa

Green Alder

Native
Small tree / shrub
Shiny Leaves
Yellow / Orange fall colour
Green bark
Small ornamental cones over winter
Fast growing
Nitrogen fixing
Excellent reclamation species
Maintains moisture
Zone 1

Alnus sitka

Sitka Alder

Native
Shrub / small tree
Shiny green leaves
Orange fall colour
Small ornamental cones over winter
Fast growing
Excellent reclamation species
Zone 1

BIRCH

Betula Species

Betula pendula “Gracilis”

Cutleaf Weeping Birch

Weeping branches of lacy leaves
White bark
Gold fall colour
Maintain moisture with heavy fall watering
Height 15m / Spread 10m
Zone 2

Betula papyrifera

White Paper Birch

Native
Single or clump
Peeling white bark
Lush green foliage
Gold fall colour
Maintain moisture with heavy fall watering
Height 12m / Spread 6m
Zone 1-2

Betula pendula “Youngi”

Youngs Weeping Birch

Specimen Tree
Weeping branches of lacy leaves
Sprawling habit
Gold fall colour
Height 4m / Spread 4m
Maintain moisture and heavy fall watering

MOUNTAIN ASH

Sorbus Species

Sorbus Americana

American Mountain Ash

Green fern-like foliage
White spring blossoms
Orange fall colour
Orange to red berries
Attractive bark
Height 8m / Spread 5m
Maintain moisture
Zone 2

Sorbus aucuparia

Mountain Ash

Native
Small tree or shrub
White spring blossoms

Bright red berries
Attractive bark
Some shade tolerance
Rich moist soil
Zone 2

PIN CHERRY / MAYDAY

Prunus Species

Prunus maackii

Amur Cherry

Lush green foliage
Yellow fall colour
White spring blossoms
Bronze bark / winter effect
Dark red to black cherries
Height 7m / Spread 5m
Moderate to rich soil
Maintain water, especially spring and fall
Zone 2

Prunus padus comutata

Mayday (European Bird Cherry)

Early lush green foliage
Orange fall colour
Attractive bark
White/Pale pink spring flowers
Black Cherries
Maintain moisture
Height 8m / Spread 6m
Zone 2

Prunus pensylvanica

Pin Cherry

Alberta Native
Lush oval shaped leaves
Orange fall colour
Attractive reddish bark
White blossoms
Edible red cherries
Maintain moisture
Height 5m / Spread 3m
Zone 2

Prunus virginiana "Shubert"

Shubert Chokecherry

Purple leaves
White blossoms
Black cherries
Maintain moisture

Height 8m / Spread 4m
Zone 2

MAPLE

Acer Species

Acer ginnala

Amur Maple

Alberta Native
Green, three lobed toothed leaves
Bright red fall colour
Needs wind shelter
Acidic well drained soil
Height 5m / Spread 3m
Zone 2-3

TAMARACK / LARCH

Larix Species

Larix laricina

Tamarack Larch

Native
Deciduous needles
Fresh green spring colour
Vibrant gold fall colour
Narrow pyramidal shape
Retains cones over winter
Height 12m / Spread 3m
Prefers boggy ground
Zone 1

Larix sibirica

Siberian Larch

Mid Sized Tree
Deciduous needles
Fresh green spring colour
Vibrant gold fall colour
Broad pyramidal shape
Retains cones over winter
Adapts well to dry land sites
Zone 1

CONIFEROUS TREES

To reduce risk from wildfire, there should be NO conifers within 10 metres of the house, outbuildings, or other structures such as decks. Also, any conifers planted in the 10 to 30 metre zone should be spaced such that there is 3 metres of horizontal between mature crowns or crown groupings. All conifers should be limbed up to a height of at least 2 metres from the ground. These are FireSmart Canada recommendations. More detailed information can be found via the FireSmart Canada website at <https://firesmartcanada.ca/> . Winter Cities design includes using conifers to make outdoor 'rooms' and to shelter people from winter winds. Shelter and 'rooms' can be creatively planted and maintained in a way that does not increase fire risk. Groupings of conifers should be greater than 10 metres from all buildings, limbed to 2 metres to remove ladder fuels, and the crown separation to adjacent woody vegetation should be 3 metres or more.

SPRUCE

Picea Species

Picea engelmannii

Engleman Spruce

Native
Blue foliage
Pyramidal shape
Drought tolerance
Height 60m / Spread 15m
Longevity 500 years
Zone 2

Picea pungens glauca

Colorado Blue Spruce

Blue foliage
Pyramidal shape
Specimen tree
Slow growing
Some drought tolerance
Zone 2

Picea glauca

White Spruce

Native
Needles glaucous green
Pyramidal shape
Very hardy

Height 20m / Spread 5m
Some drought tolerance
Zone 1-2

Picea pungens

Colorado Spruce

Green needles
Pyramidal shape
Drought tolerance
Height 15m / Spread 5m
Zone 2

PINE

Pinus Species

Pinus contorta latifolia

Lodgepole Pine

Native
Green twisted needles
Tall slender tree
High drought tolerance
Height 12m / Spread 3m
Zone 1-2

Pinus aristata

Bristlecone Pine

Deep green needles with white flecks
Long living
Slow growing
Asymmetrical
Drought tolerance
Zone 2