



MAY: RAKE AWAY DEAD GRASSES, DEBRIS

Wake up and smell the roses! Almost.

Spring has returned to the Kenai Peninsula and gardeners have come out of hibernation. The rest of us might start thinking about vegetation around the house, too. It's a fine time to create lush green space that won't burn. Think of this as making a fuel break all the way around a building. You can even make it attractive. Start by getting rid of any dead grass around your house. Borrow a rake if you have to.

Good preparation only begins with getting rid of dead material left over from last year. Crispy brown fireweed, tall dry grass, fallen branches and similar debris all impede new growth. They also dry out very quickly and spread fire when ignited. Short, green grass on the other hand, looks good and won't spread fire. To make a minimum fuel break, maintain a 30-foot swath all the way around. Consider thinning and then pruning the remaining trees

around the perimeter of your property.

Many homeowners want to hide the foundation and visually soften the hard edges of a house. Those shrubby conifers look dandy in catalogs, but they also burn like gasoline rags if ignited. If you grow them around your basement or slab, you may as well pile kindling under a fuel tank. Don't do it. Instead, consider lily, iris, tulip or just about anything that starts from a bulb. These have fleshy leaves that hold water and won't spread fire. They add a splash of color too. Showy shrubs like lilac do best when isolated in full sun away from buildings.

You can make a date for FireWise team members to visit your home and offer advice. For more information on ways you can be FireWise, go to www.firewisekp.com contact FireWise Kenai Peninsula 260-4262 or sharon.roesch@alaska.gov.