

Thinning basics

The purpose of thinning trees and shrubs is to reduce the likelihood that fire will jump from plant to plant. Once a fire's ability to transfer to other plants is reduced, it will quickly and dramatically lose intensity.

When choosing which trees or shrubs to remove, choose the ones that have the poorest vigor. Signs of poor vigor include numerous bare or spindly branches, poor color in the leaves or needles, and evidence of parasites, such as insects or fungus. ❁



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Trees and brush growing tightly together can create a fire-friendly environment. Thinning trees and shrubs – and pruning potential ladder fuels – limits a fire's ability to jump from plant to plant, and from the ground to the trees' crowns.



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No moonscaping

Thinning is good but don't overdo it. Healthy trees can shield a home from airborne firebrands. If you aren't sure what to cut, consult a forester or tree care professional before using the saw.



A dense stand of trees and brush can burn intensely. This stand becomes less of a fire-risk problem after lower tree limbs are pruned,

the brush is thinned, and suppressed trees are removed. The remaining trees will thrive – and likely survive a fire.



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