



# Town of Cave Creek

## Planning Department

### **LANDSCAPING: When Mother Nature needs our help & how you can help reduce the risk of Wildfires:**

The Town of Cave Creek was greatly impacted by 2 wildfires in 2020 – the East Desert Fire and the Ocotillo Fire. As those stressful events appear smaller in our community’s rearview mirror, it is still important to remain vigilant about the threat of wildfires as Cave Creek is situated within an Urban-Wildland Interface. Below please find information regarding invasive weeds and grasses that should be removed and other tips and tricks to protect your property from the threat of wildfires.

#### ***Critical fire threats - Invasive weeds and grasses:***

Stinknet/AKA Globe Chamomile – Manual removal prior to seed is the most labor intensive method but also the most successful. Ortho Weed and Grass has shown success once the weed is visible and pre-emergent herbicide such as Milestone applied in early spring and/or fall after is effective.

Bufflegrass – String trimmer, rake and remove.

Red Brome – String trimmer, rake and remove.

Malta Starthistle – Hula Hoe or manual removal are the most effective method of removal. Root is hearty enough to grow back after treated with chemicals and herbicides.

Fiddleneck – String trimmer, hula hoe, manual removal or herbicides are effective. Fiddleneck is harmful to livestock and should be kept clear of any turnouts or livestock enclosures.

Desert Broom – Prune down to the ground, apply Round Up or similar herbicide directly to fresh pruned remains. After several months root will/should pry out of the ground.

#### ***Landscaping best practices to reduce threat of brushfires:***

*Think of the desert floor as a fuse*

- Remove invasive weeds and grasses in and around native trees and shrubs.
- Selectively remove native shrubs growing in large clusters.
- Prune back tree limbs growing into another tree.
- Remove trees where the canopy is close to a roofline or window.
- Remove and dispose of any dead branches or limbs from trees.
- Schedule regular maintenance of native trees, avoid “over pruning” native trees as they will react by pushing out even more growth lower to the ground. Removing 20% of branches is the maximum recommended care per year.
- Native shrubs are a good thing. Bursage, brittlebush, jojoba, creosote and turpentine are the primary native groundcovers and help keep many of the weeds listed above from completely taking over the desert.
- Keep a clear path, at the very least to walk, around the perimeter of a structure or fenced area. Around structures, maintain 30’ clear of overgrown brush, weeds and other flammable debris.

If you have questions please contact the Planning Department at (480) 488-6633.