

PURR-FECT CAT HAVENS | THE SECRET GARDEN | FIRE-SAFE HOMES

BOULDER COUNTY

Home & Garden

WINTER 2010-2011

MAGAZINE

COVER STORY

Wave Bye to White

SAY HELLO TO COLOR!

FINDING
TREASURES AT
Thrift Stores

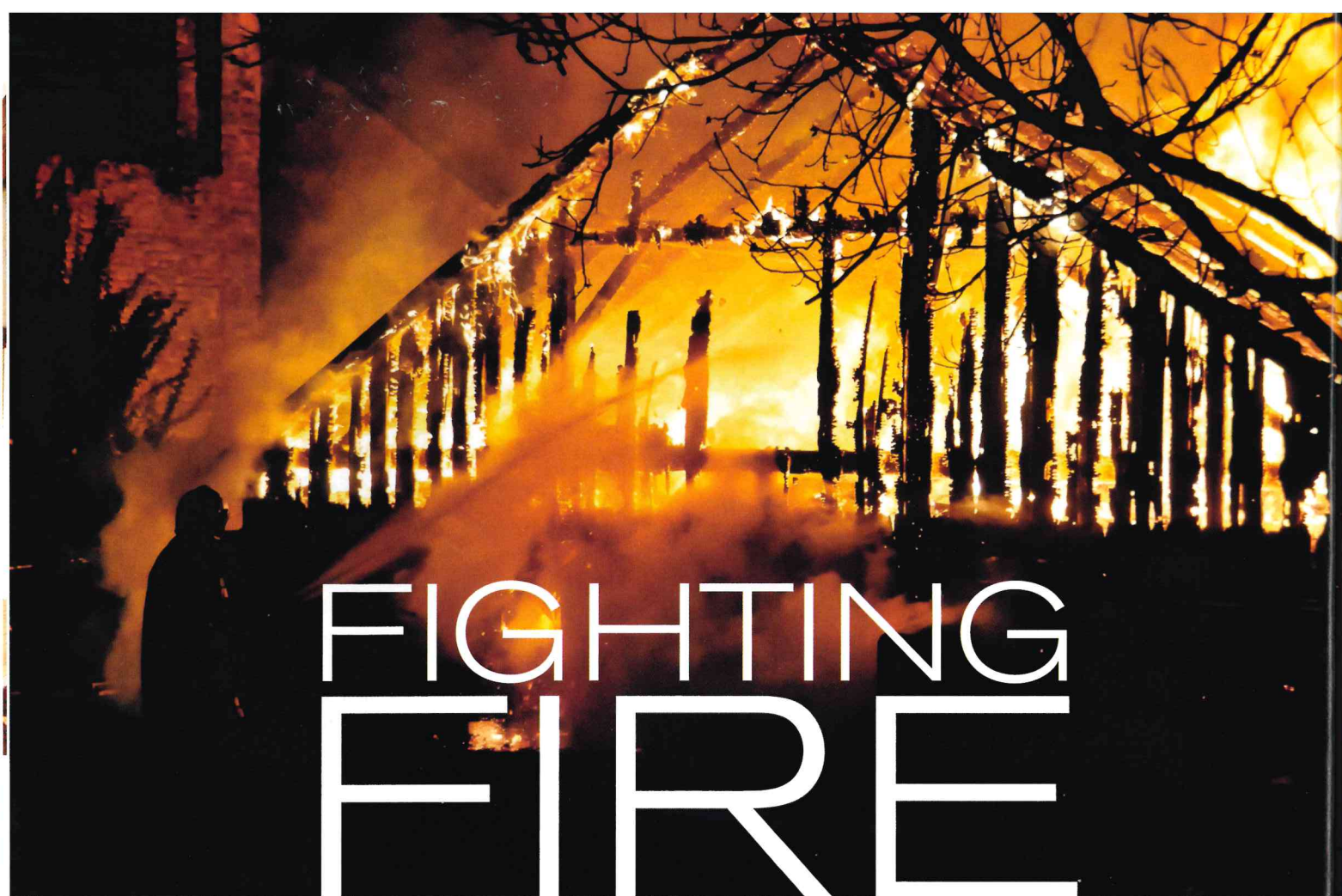
**Anti-Aging
Skin Care**

HOW TO MAKE
YOUR HOME
**ENERGY
EFFICIENT**

homeandgardenmag.com

YOUR COMPLETE
HOME RESOURCE





FIGHTING FIRE WITH FACTS

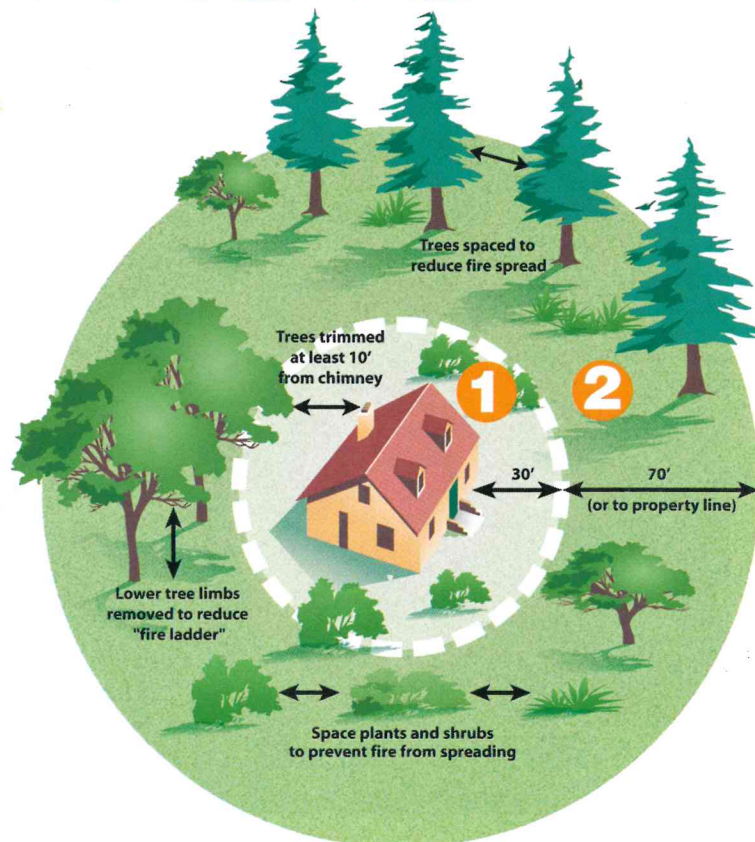
No home is fireproof, but these strategies will make your home fire-resistant.

By Scott Rodwin & Ron Flax

IN THE WAKE OF THE Fourmile Canyon Fire that destroyed 169 homes in Boulder County, learning how to create a fire-resistant house is on the minds of many residents. Though there's no such thing as a fireproof home, you can substantially mitigate the danger with these 10 strategies:

1 Defensible Zones

Creating a defensible zone around your home is the first line of protection. Remove all trees within at least 15 feet of your home. If the trees are dense or of mixed species, expand the zone to 30 feet. Space trees at least 10 feet apart, and remove the lower limbs on mature trees within 100 feet of your home (if the trees are dense or mixed, increase that to 200 feet). Surround your home with nonflammable materials such as gravel, stone or concrete. For landscaping, use low ground covers or short grasses. Bury propane tanks or give them their own defensible zone.

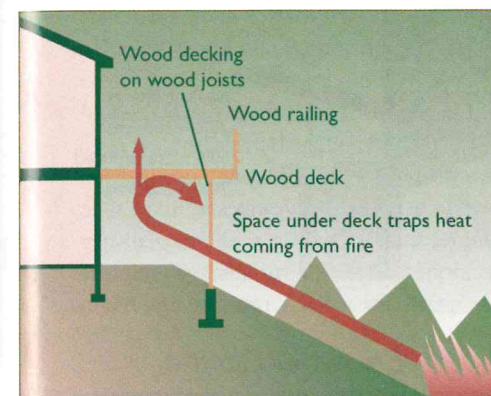


PHOTOS: FIRE BY VILANT; ILLUSTRATION: COURTESY CAL FIRE

2 Decks & Fences

Decks are often constructed with standard wood-framing lumber, which is not only easily combustible but a dangerous fuel source right at your doorstep. The safest decks are built from noncombustible materials like stone, metal and concrete. There are also fire-resistant hardwoods and composite decking materials on the market, but be sure to check the manufacturers' literature for fire-resistance ratings. If fire can attack these structures from below, they are especially at risk, so if possible enclose decks to the ground.

Use noncombustible materials such as metal or masonry for fences or other items that attach directly to your home.



COURTESY COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE

3 Exterior Construction Materials

Choose noncombustible exterior materials like stone, cementitious stucco, brick, metal, fiber cement siding or concrete. If you use wood on the exterior, specify heavy timbers—4-by-6's or larger—instead of 2-by-dimensional lumber, as heavier timbers are harder to ignite. Fire-resistant paints and coatings can help protect homes that have combustible exterior materials, but they have to be reapplied regularly to maintain their effectiveness. Boulder County does not typically accept these coatings as alternatives to noncombustible materials.

Perhaps the single most important surface to consider is roofing. Use a Class A fire-rated material (required in all Boulder County mountain communities), such as metal, clay tile, concrete or composite asphalt shingles. Keep in mind that some other materials, such as molded plastic shingles, only achieve a Class A rating when they're part of a rated assembly that includes a fire-resistant underlayment, like DensDeck Roof Board.

Paradise SHOULDN'T BE A DESTINATION, IT SHOULD BE OUT YOUR *Back Door*.



From grandiose backyard swimming pools to intimate indoor soaking spas, Aquality Construction will let you dip your toe into luxury. Our beautiful pools and spas are personalized to your desires – as basic or elaborate as you want. Quartz, tile-mosaic, waterfalls, fiber-optic lighting... jump right into the pool of your dreams.



**BOULDER COUNTY'S
AWARD-WINNING
CUSTOM POOLS & SPA BUILDER
FOR OVER 30 YEARS**



303.469.2229 • www.aqualityconstruction.com

Can you afford not to have a Fire Retention System?

4 Unvented Attics & Crawl Spaces

Most attics and crawl spaces built in the last 50 years were vented, both for improved energy efficiency and to decrease the possibility of hot air and burning embers entering the home's envelope.

But building scientists now strongly recommend unvented attics and crawl spaces. This is achieved by placing insulation directly on the underside of the sheathing (and the perimeter of the crawl space), and treating the enclosed attic and crawl spaces as part of the home's conditioned area. Not only does this lend itself to super-tight, energy-efficient, fire-resistant homes, it often results in additional usable storage space.

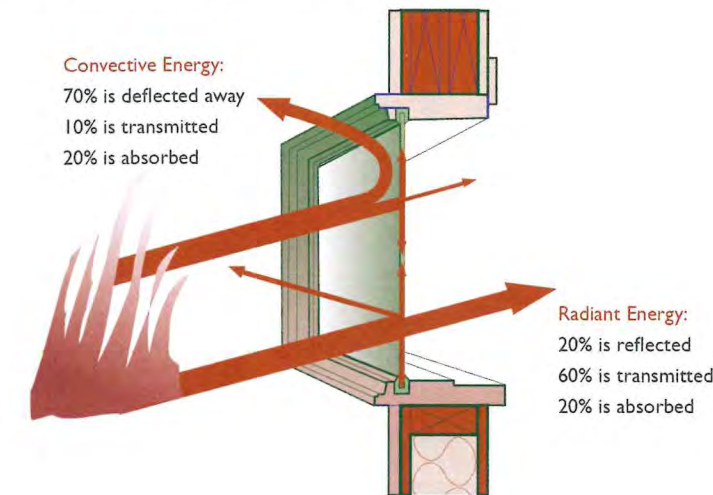
6 Airtight Construction

During wildfires, superheated air and small embers often enter the home through very small gaps and cracks. To keep hot gases and embers out, introduce the same kind of air sealing and weatherization recommended for energy efficiency and thermal comfort. Home Energy Rating System (HERS) auditors can identify thermal gaps in your home's envelope, and a weatherization contractor can seal them (find these energy specialists at bgbg.org). In a wildfire, even things as simple as good weather stripping can make a big difference.



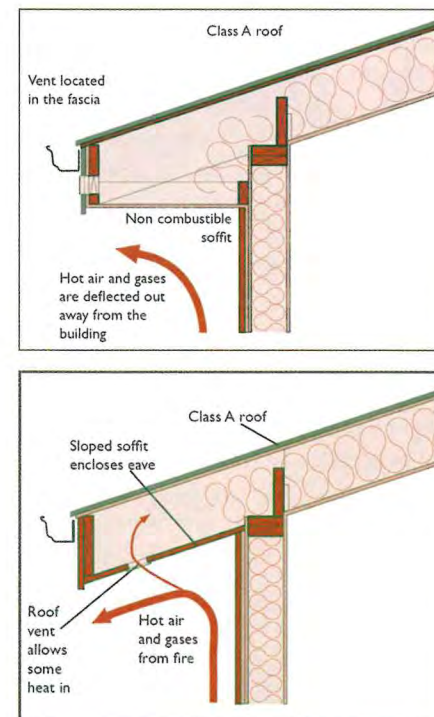
5 High-Performance Windows

Many house fires actually start on the inside of the home from radiant heat passing through the windows. When glass shatters from thermal shock and falls away, the home rarely survives. Double-pane, low-E windows that have a low solar-heat-gain coefficient reflect a significant portion of radiant heat and inhibit combustion from within. For even more protection, consider tempered glass, as it's more likely to stay intact during a fire. Metal-clad or fiberglass window frames are considerably more flame-resistant than wood or vinyl. For extreme protection, consider exterior metal shutters.



7 Eaves & Soffits

Superheated air and flames can gather on the underside of eaves and soffits, making these spots especially vulnerable. Boulder County requires ignition-resistant soffit details that move soffit vents to the fascia.



ILLUSTRATIONS COURTESY COLORADO STATE FOREST SERVICE. PHOTO BY SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

8 Geometry

Design your home or addition with simple geometry for both walls and roof. Nooks and crannies often catch pine needles, dry leaves and other dead vegetation, which places a fuel source right where you don't want it. Complex geometry also encourages superheated air to swirl around projections, which concentrates heat and can deposit burning embers on the house.



PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

9 Emergency Access & Water

When planning driveways and site design, create easy access for fire vehicles. Good emergency access includes pullouts on long driveways, clearing overhanging vegetation over the driveway and making sure the home is easily visible from the road.

A water cistern designed for fire protection is best, but a pool, pond or hot tub can sometimes be a useful water supply for firefighters. As long as it's still working when the fire arrives, a landscape sprinkler system can help create a protective ring around the home. While internal fire-sprinkler systems are useful for suppressing fires inside the home, they're much less effective against wildfires.

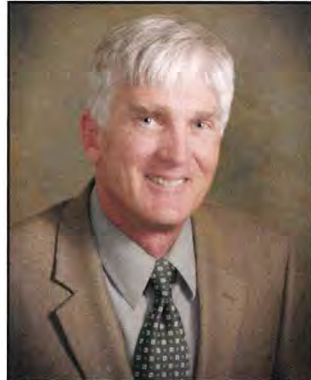
10 Property Maintenance

Property maintenance is a crucial ingredient to creating a fire-safe home. Remove dead landscape and gutter debris regularly, because windblown embers easily ignite them. Store firewood and propane tanks at least 30 feet from the house (burying the tank is best).

BY IMPLEMENTING THESE 10 strategies, you'll stack the odds in your favor during a wildfire. Defensible zones and noncombustible building materials will protect your home from direct-flame contact and windblown flaming debris. Tight seals and high-performance windows will protect against superheated air, windblown embers and radiant heat.

And while no home is fireproof, yours at least will be fire-resistant. 🏠

Scott Rodwin, AIA, LEED AP, and Ron Flax, RESNET, BPI, LEED AP, teach a fire-resistant construction seminar for several organizations and Green Building 101 for the city and county of Boulder. To see their fire-resistance PowerPoint, visit rodwinarch.com. To read more tips on creating a fire-resistant landscape, visit homeandgardenmag.com/?p=1685.



"I Can Help"

James A. Cooke, PC
Attorney & Counselor at Law

General Practice Law Specializing In:

<p>REAL ESTATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre- & post-closing disputes • Construction defects • Property line disputes 	<p>GENERAL LAW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic relations & divorce • Contract disputes • Criminal matters
--	---

303.440.9400
2727 Pine Street, Suite 3 • Boulder

Former CU Adjunct Professor in Real Estate Law
Serving Boulder County For Over 25 Years

VALUE • QUALITY • SERVICE

New WINDOWS



for AMERICA

"A Better Way to Buy Windows"



Our Best-Selling Window
Normally Sells at \$500-\$600

- **Factory Direct**
- **Unmatched Buying Power**
- **Unmatched Savings Passed on to You!**

Compare our features and you'll pick our window!

Premium Double Hung or Double Slider
Low-E with Argon Gas

We accept all major credit cards

Our Promise To You...

- No Gimmicks...No Games
- No Unbelievable Buy Now or Never Offers
- Free No-Pressure Estimates
- Phone Quotes - No Problem
- Quality Premium Windows
- Unmatched Lifetime Transferable Warranty
- Affordable Options For Everyone
- Lower Prices. Higher Quality. Guaranteed.

\$285

Any Size Installed

Standard Installation up to 101 U.I.
Must present this ad




Gold Star Winner Since 2003

303-920-0175

www.windowsam.com

Ask us about Doors & Siding!

troubleshooter.com

Proud Member of Tom Martino's Exclusive Referral List