

TOP TEN WILDFIRE MYTHS

1. Myth: Wildfire is likely to ignite my home as a wall of flame passes through my neighbourhood.

Fact: 90 percent of homes burned by wildfire are ignited by cast embers, not by flames or radiant heat.

2. Myth: My property will not survive a wildfire so why bother doing anything?

Fact: There are many quick, inexpensive, and easy actions homeowners can take to dramatically improve their home's wildfire resiliency like cleaning debris from the gutters and moving firewood. Your actions can save not only your home and family, but also your community from catastrophe.

3. Myth: FireSmart is going to tell me to cut down all the trees.

Fact: Assessments provide recommendations only: Homeowners choose which ones to pursue. Recommendations focus on the home and the 30 metre zone around the home where conifers (needle-bearing trees and shrubs) could ignite the home by flame, radiant heat, or ember cast. Conifer fuels may be mitigated by pruning and thinning, or replaced with less flammable deciduous (broadleaf) trees.

4. Myth: I don't want an assessment because my property will fail.

Fact: Most properties are at risk from wildfire. The free and confidential FireSmart assessment gives you peace of mind knowing that the report identifies case-specific priorities to improve your home. Many priority actions are quick and inexpensive such as vent screening or weather-stripping doors.

5. Myth: I don't live near the forest so my home is not at risk.

Fact: Wildfire can cast wind-blown embers hundreds of metres from the fire front. Embers may ignite structures between your property and the forest which can create a fire path to your home.

6. Myth: We live in the rainforest so I'm not concerned about wildfire.

Fact: The Cowichan Valley lies in the dry Coastal Douglas-fir Bio-geoclimatic Zone which extends from Cumberland to Victoria along the East Coast of Vancouver Island. The worst wildfire conditions in BC history occurred in 2023 after 14 extreme drought years since 1999.

7. Myth: We don't need to prepare our shed to the same FireSmart standard as our home.

Fact: Garages, greenhouses, woodsheds and other accessory buildings within 10 metres of your home are part of the *Home Ignition Hazard Zone* and pose a serious risk to your home should they ignite.

8. Myth: I can protect my own property if a wildfire threatens my neighbourhood.

Fact: Residents will be evacuated in advance of a wildfire threat. Those who refuse orders place firefighters at risk and will not be rescued. Prepare your home and go!

9. Myth: I don't have time right now to plan for emergencies.

Fact: The worst plan is no plan at all. Get started by visiting www.FireSmartBC.ca for ideas.

10. Myth: I have the WASP Sprinkler system so my home is protected from wildfire already.

Myth: Sprinklers and other mechanized systems are valuable although they are secondary to structural improvements such as a 1.5 metre non-combustible zone around the home and by maintaining an ember-resistant exterior. Sprinklers can exhaust wells or damage the home if left on after evacuation.