

Subject line: CVCA Fire Preparedness Update #1

EMAIL TEXT FOLLOWS:

Carmel Views is rising to the task of reducing the risks of wildfire to our homes and our community!

This **Fire Preparedness Update** is the first in a series of quarterly emails providing “news you can use” to homeowners in our community about how they can help protect their homes, families, and neighbors from wildfire risks.

1) Help Carmel Views Become a “Firewise” Community

The CVCA Board has launched an exciting new initiative to become recognized by Firewise USA® – a national, voluntary, public education program – as a community that is undertaking steps to reduce the risks of wildfire to homeowners.

Firewise participation will accelerate our community’s efforts to improve homeowner understanding of wildfire risks and of the kinds of pragmatic actions that each of us can take to help protect our homes, families, and property. In addition, the visible status of Carmel Views as “Firewise-recognized” may improve: homeowner’s insurance rates and persistence with some companies, access to fire mitigation grants, real estate values, and defensibility during wildfires. The Fire Safe Council for Monterey County has strongly encouraged CVCA to participate in Firewise, thereby joining more than 350 Firewise-recognized communities from across California, including two in our area.

As the first step in applying for Firewise-recognition, CVCA is conducting a survey to assess our community’s strengths and vulnerabilities that affect wildfire risk. ***Please fill out and return this CONFIDENTIAL survey when you receive it in the mail along with your annual dues statement.*** The survey results will help inform development of a 3-year Action Plan for Carmel Views that will be designed to improve member understanding and spur effective action.

Stay tuned for more. Over the coming months, we will be reporting back the survey findings and asking for your ideas about what to include in the Carmel Views Firewise Action Plan. In the meantime, you can learn more about Firewise USA® and access helpful information about preparing homes for wildfire at <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>.

2) Participate in Chipper Days

Mark your calendar! The Cypress Fire District has announced that we will have four opportunities to take advantage of “Chipper Days” this year. This terrific program provides a way for you to dispose of brush, branches, and other vegetation from your property *for free*. The only catch is that you must stack it neatly along the roadside at the start of each designated collection period, and, **IMPORTANTLY**, follow the Cypress Fire District’s rules. That means: no *Genista*; no poison oak; no vines; and no metal objects. Branches and brush must be 6-inches or less in diameter, arranged with the butt-end perpendicular to the road. Also, stacked piles must be no higher than 4 feet.

The Chipper periods for 2021 are:

- April 5-25
- July 5-8
- September 13-26
- November 1-14

As usual, CVCA will post a banner at the community entrance announcing each period. Make certain to have your material out by the road by 8AM on the first Monday of each period. Please do not put out material more than two weeks in advance, because it creates a road and walking hazard.

To learn more about the Cypress Fire District’s Chipper Program and review the program guidance see <https://cypressfire.org/fuel-reduction/> .

3) Stamp Out *Genista*

Ever wondered about that yellow-flowering bush along the roadside? Although it may add a touch of color, it's not pretty and it's not nice! It's *Genista*, also known as French broom, a highly prolific and invasive weed. Left to its own devices, *Genista* forms dense stands that burn easily and spread wildfires. It also harms biodiversity, because *Genista* crowds out native plants and degrades habitats for our local pollinators and wildlife.

But you can do something about *Genista* in Carmel Views by eradicating it on your property. A short article by our neighbor Larry Arthur, available on the CVCA website, will explain why and show you how. Larry advises that it is "...[b]est to pull out the plant (roots and all) when genista has just sprouted in Feb-Mar." So, now is the time to act.

To access Larry's helpful article, go to the CVCA Fire Abatement page (<http://carmelviews.net/fire-abatement/>) and scroll down to "Genista – Up by the Roots." Just below, you will see that CVCA can loan you a special tool, "Genista pullers," to aid in your task.

*Please email Liz Chornesky (ecwchorn@gmail.com), and copy your message to the Board (cvcaboard@gmail.com), with questions or comments about this or future **CVCA Fire Preparedness Updates**.*