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[CASE STUDY:
ALL-NEW GARDEN]

Fire & water

This San Diego yard is verdant, inviting—and resists wildfires. Follow its lessons for creating your own gorgeous, fire-smart landscape



Agave

Replace flammable plants

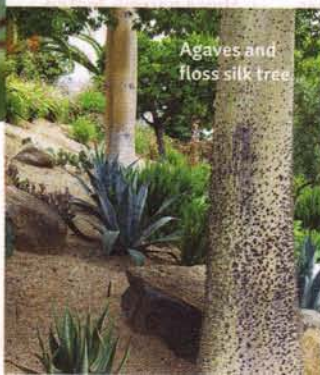
Before this landscape was reimagined, a thick blanket of worn-out junipers covered the slopes; their resinous foliage is potentially dangerous in a firestorm.

Go lush

Fleshy-leaved (and water-retaining) plants are good choices for fire-wise gardens. Dotting the pool-side landscape, pictured above, are nearly black aeoniums around a tall tree aloe, plus agaves, and a floss silk tree (*Ceiba speciosa*)—whose trunk is studded with water-storing prickles.

Water, water everything

The more hydrated any plant is, the more fire-resistant it will be. Although the plants in this garden are drought-tolerant, they still need occasional deep watering to keep them from drying out and becoming potential fuel. >54



Agaves and floss silk tree

Isn't this a fire hazard?

Although they appear to hug the house—a fire-safety no-no—these trees don't actually overhang it. They're also spaced well apart, and kept well watered and pruned.



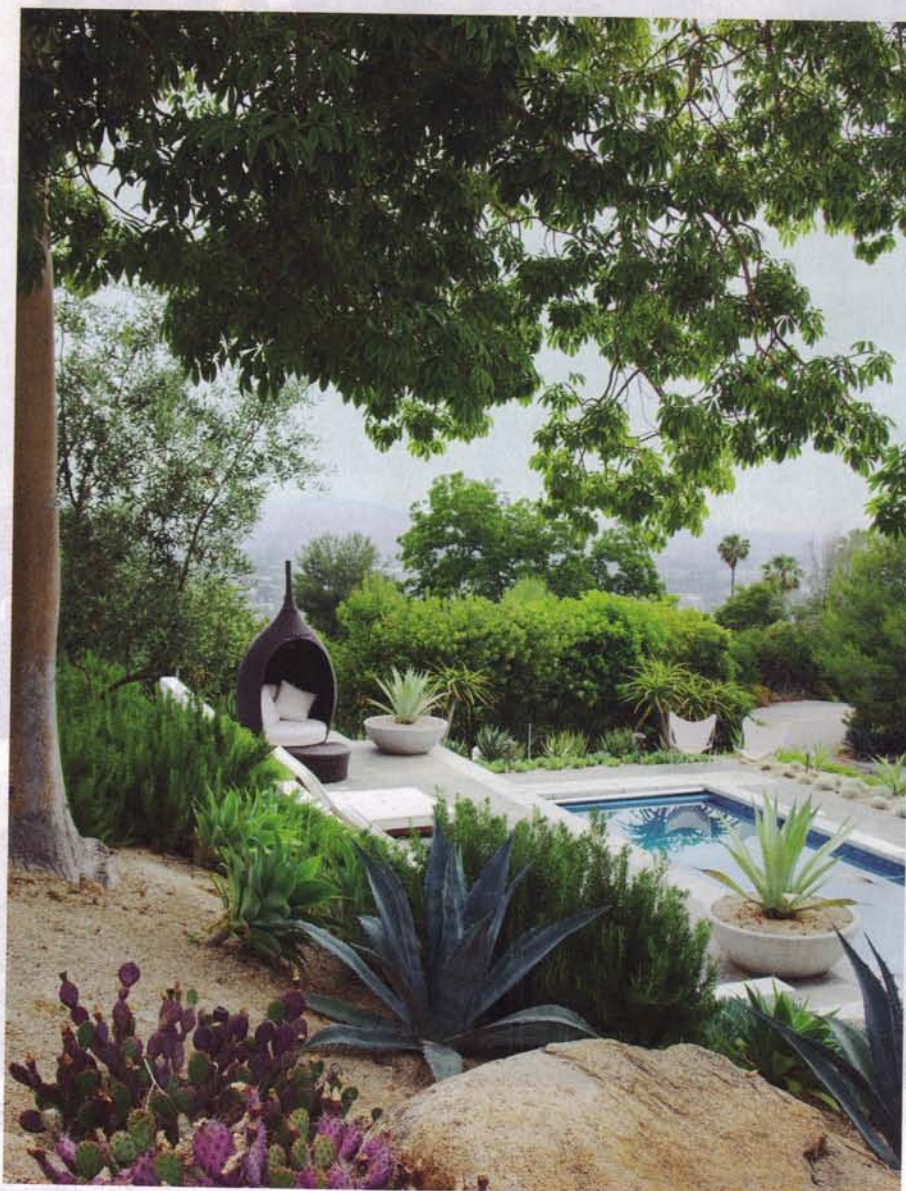
Skip the tanbark

In a fire-wise garden, use gravel or decomposed granite—not flammable bark mulch—to cover the bare ground around plants. It also helps keep weeds down and looks better with succulents.

Keep things simple

Leave space between plantings, which reduces the risk of “fire ladders” (fires that climb to the crowns of nearby trees). Boulders and block walls also help to slow the spread of flames.

—NAN STERMAN



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