

## Day to day life

with the forest

### Living In Provence Also Means ... Living daily with the Forest

The forest, in the Var Department alone represents 348 000 hectares over a total surface of 602 000 hectares.

This illustrates the extent of the forest in our department !

Last century, the inhabitants of our region were mostly agriculturists, sylviculturists, or in more general terms, people living from the forest, in the forest.

Forest fires, which have always existed in our region, formed a part of their daily lives, and part of their culture.

This culture was reflected in their behaviour and even in the way they constructed their houses.

Nowadays, it is quite different.

We have come to know this marvelous forest of Provence for its beauty, for its flora and fauna, and for the tranquility of the countryside.

Therefore, to us, a forest fire becomes the catastrophe that we never envisaged nor expected.

We panic and as a result, become vulnerable.

Day to day life with the forest also means knowing how to live with its dangers !

Provence  
Forest

## Useful Addresses

- The Var Prefecture  
[www.var.pref.gouv.fr](http://www.var.pref.gouv.fr)
- The Conseil Général du Var  
[www.cg83.fr](http://www.cg83.fr)
- The Departmental Administration of Agriculture and Forests (DDAF)  
[www.cdig-var.org](http://www.cdig-var.org)
- The Departmental Fires and Rescue Services (S.D.I.S.)  
[www.sdis83.fr](http://www.sdis83.fr)
- Office National des Forêts  
[www.onf.fr](http://www.onf.fr)
- Your local Mayor's Office
- The Fire Department (Sapeurs-Pompiers)  
Telephone : 18 or 112

NBCommunication : 04 94 89 56 94 - Crédits photos : ADCCFF83

Living  
in Provence

also means

Living daily  
with the  
Forest

- ★ Clearing away undergrowth
- ★ Advice for self-protection



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## Clearing away undergrowth

An intelligent action  
| A legal obligation

### Why clear away undergrowth ?

Clearing away the undergrowth on the land surrounding your home is **the best protection for yourself and your possessions** :

- It **retards** the spread of the fire.
- It **reduces** the force of the fire, which in turn reduces gas and heat emissions.
- It **prevents** flames from reaching the flammable parts of your premises.

### Clearing away undergrowth protects YOU

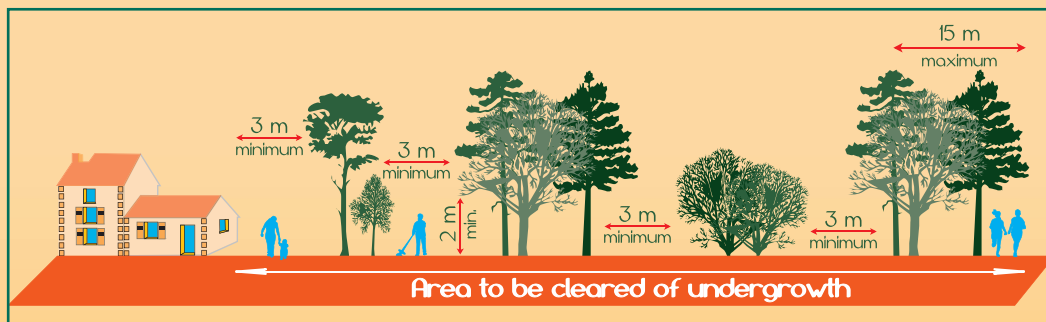
- Fire fighters can intervene more effectively and with less risk when a property has been cleared of undergrowth.
- When a fire reaches a zone that has been cleared, it reduces in intensity due to the lack of combustibles.
- You are safer in the confines of your house.

### Clearing away undergrowth protects our forests

- It limits the chances of an accidental fire starting on your property.

### The trees in my garden will not catch alight ... FALSE !

A fierce fire, fanned by the wind, dries up and ignites all vegetation without discrimination ... even olive trees !



[www.ADCCFF83.net](http://www.ADCCFF83.net), under heading "prévention"

### Clearing away undergrowth : A Legal Obligation

Article 32 of the Law of Orientation on Forests of 9 July 2001 defines clearing away of undergrowth obligatory "The operations of which the objective is to reduce the intensity and to limit the spread of fires by reducing combustible vegetation, thereby guaranteeing a break in the continuity of vegetation".

The Commissioner of the Var has detailed the regulation of the obligatory clearing away of undergrowth ([www.var.pref.gouv.fr](http://www.var.pref.gouv.fr)).

**What does this concern ?** All land and constructions less than 200 metres from the forest (see details given by the P.O.S. and the P.L.U. on the DDAF site : [www.cdig-var.org](http://www.cdig-var.org))

## Your house

and forest fires

Having correctly respected the rules of clearing away undergrowth, there are still a few precautions to take in order to protect your house.

**Most often, your premises will catch alight only if the fire penetrates the interior.**

#### Precautions to take

- **Opt for wooden shutters** instead of plastic.
- Do **not** install **PVC drainpipes**.
- Do not have big bay windows without wooden protection.
- **Clean your roof every year** to eliminate leaves and pine needles.
- **Avoid stacking wood** against the house.
- Assure that there are **no unused gas bottles or flammable liquids** lying around that could explode in case of fire.
- Opt of **underground fuel tanks**.

#### In case of short term absence Shopping, the beach, a walk ...

- If a fire starts in the vicinity, you risk not being able to return to your house.
- **Close all windows, doors and shutters** before leaving home, even if it is only for a few hours.
- **Avoid locking your gate** in order to allow access by the emergency services.

If the fire moves in the direction of your house ... If your house is a permanent structure and has been correctly cleared of undergrowth, it is your **best form of protection**.

Unless otherwise advised  
by the authorities

- **Assemble your family and pets** in your house.
- **Open the gate** of your property to allow access to fire fighters.
- **Close all shutters**.
- Block all openings with **wet towels, sheets, ...**
- **Close the trap door** of the fire place.
- Wear cotton clothing that covers your whole body (no synthetic fabrics).
- Keep the following items handy: leather gloves, a cap, glasses, a scarf and leather ankle or knee length shoes if possible.
- If you have a swimming pool that uses a petrol-operated pump, take the pump indoors, as well as the pipes and the fuel can.
- **Place gas bottles** in the swimming pool or in a bath filled with water.
- **Take in plastic garden furniture**.
- **Shelter cars**, with windows closed, in the opposite direction of the wind, against the house.

The fire passes by very quickly,  
a few minutes or more.

After the fire has passed through your property, use your pool pump to soak everything flammable around your house.

- Pay special attention to the roof and the roof structure.
- Extinguish residual fires by watering them abundantly and by turning over ashes where coals could still be smoldering.
- Check to see if your neighbours need help.



for advice from  
**GrantIBOU**  
[www.ADCCFF83.net](http://www.ADCCFF83.net)



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