

# The Benefits of Fire

California's long, dry summers bring a constant risk of wildfires. While humans may fear the destructiveness of fire, many of California's plant communities are well adapted to withstand—and even benefit from—periodic burning.

For centuries, California Indians skillfully used fire as a tool to clear land and make it more productive. Today, trained park staff follow that tradition, lighting fires under carefully controlled conditions to gain the benefits wildfires would otherwise provide.



In pine forests and giant sequoia groves, fire returns nutrients back into the soil and allows more light to reach the forest floor, helping seedlings to survive.



In grassy areas, fire can curb the spread of non-native plants. It also stimulates native plants to grow, providing new food for hungry wildlife.



On brushy slopes, fire triggers a dramatic cycle of renewal. Some shrubs and trees recover by sprouting new foliage from their blackened stumps. Millions of seeds suddenly sprout, spreading greenery and colorful blossoms. In time, these plants are replaced by the newly growing brush.

