

MODULE 5

WILDFIRE PREVENTION



CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT



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Created by The Swedish School of Library and Information Science.



UNIVERSITY
OF BORÅS



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The fifth module focuses on wildfire prevention, with practical advice on how individuals can reduce fire risks. It covers safe practices when camping, such as managing campfires, and guidelines for safely burning debris to prevent uncontrolled fires. Participants will gain valuable knowledge to protect both themselves and the environment from fire hazards.



CONTENT

Throughout this module, you will learn about:

1. Tips for Camping Safely to avoid Wildfire

2. Debris Burning Safety Tips to Prevent Wildfires

3. Facing a Wildfire in Rural Areas



4.If you are in the forest/countryside

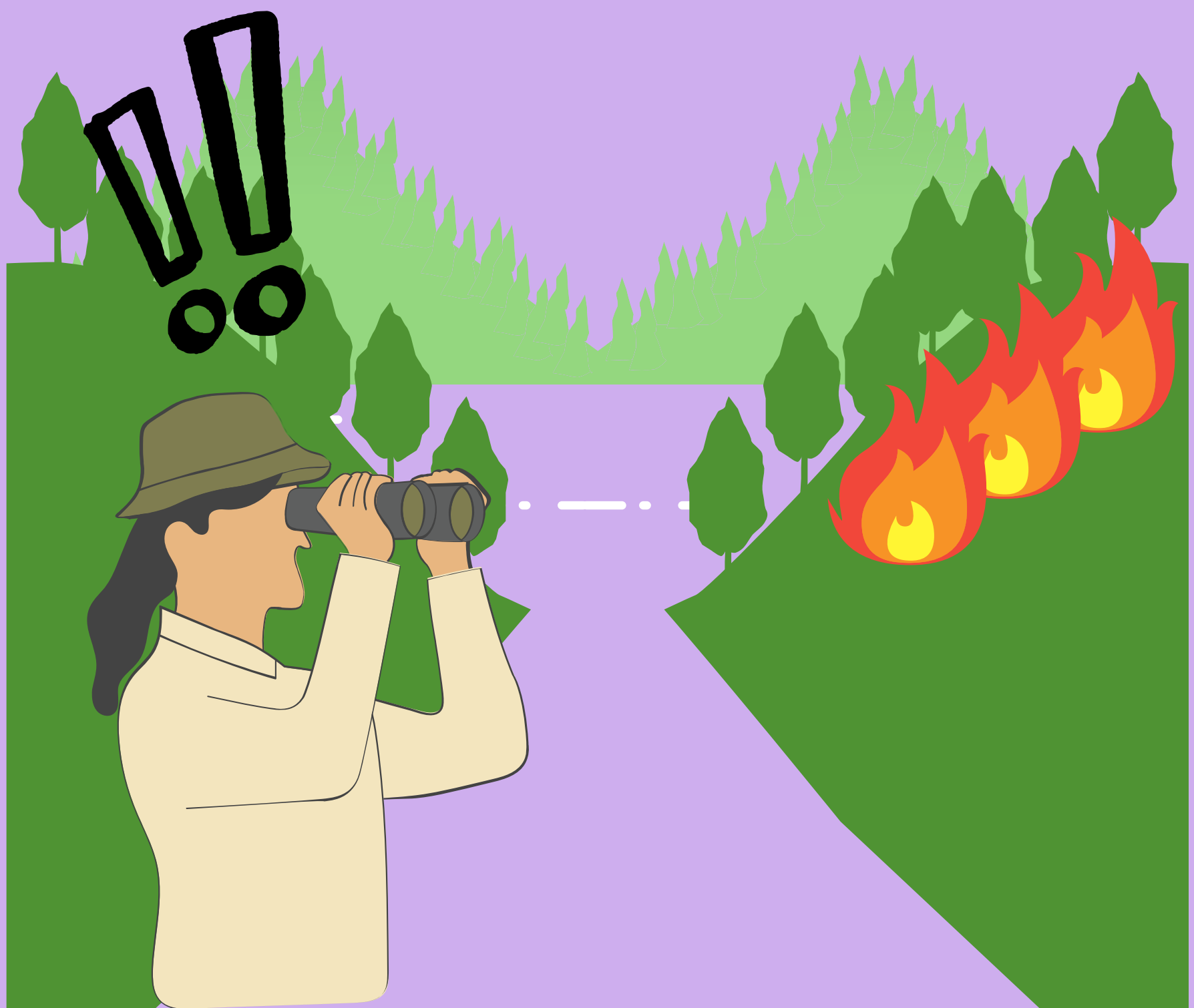
5.If you notice a wildfire

6.Tips for Safe Electric Equipment

Use and Maintenance to Prevent

Wildfires

7.Forest fire smart landscape



TIPS FOR CAMPING SAFELY TO AVOID WILDFIRE



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Camping safely while minimizing the risk of wildfire requires careful planning and adherence to best practices. Here are tips to ensure you enjoy the great outdoors without contributing to wildfire risks:



CHECK FIRE DANGER RATINGS AND RESTRICTIONS

Before heading out, check the local fire danger ratings and any fire restrictions in place. During periods of high fire danger, certain activities may be restricted or banned.



CAMPSITE RULES

Familiarise yourself with and obey all of the campsite rules, particularly with the prevention and emergency plans.

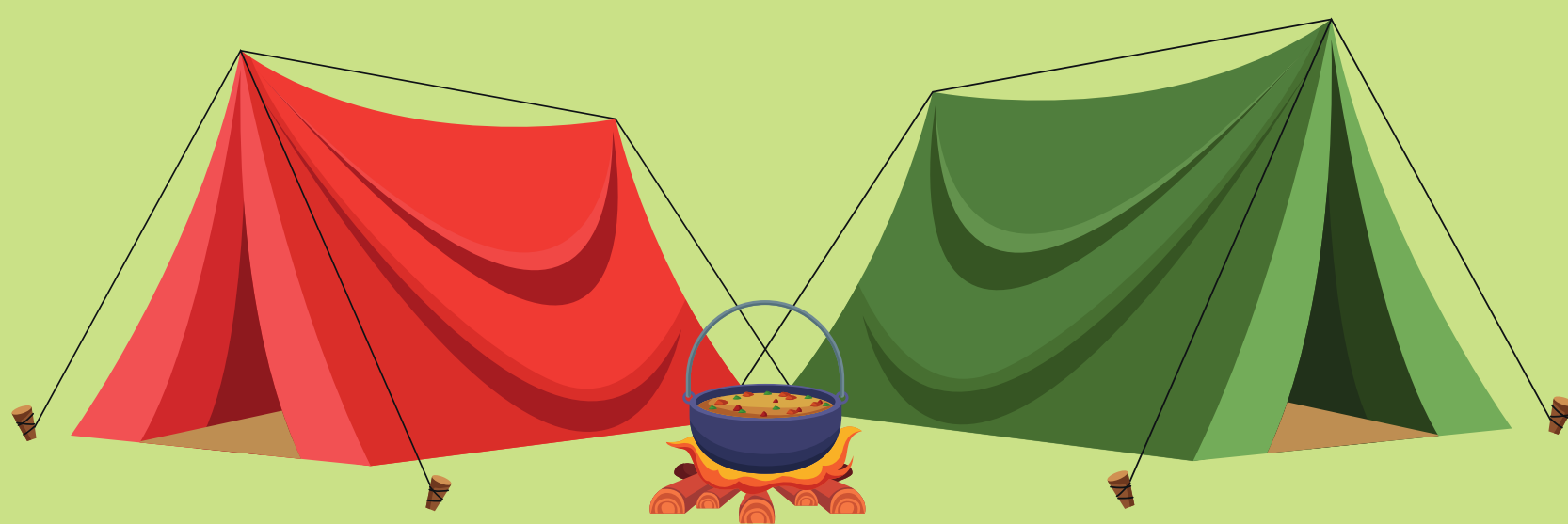


Park your vehicle in the designated parking areas in such a way as not to obstruct heavy emergency vehicles to get through.

USE ESTABLISHED CAMPSITES

Whenever possible, camp in designated campsites where fire rings or pits are provided, and the risk of wildfires is managed. Pitch your tent or park your caravan away from bushes or other inflammable materials.

Do not smoke or light candles inside tents or caravans.



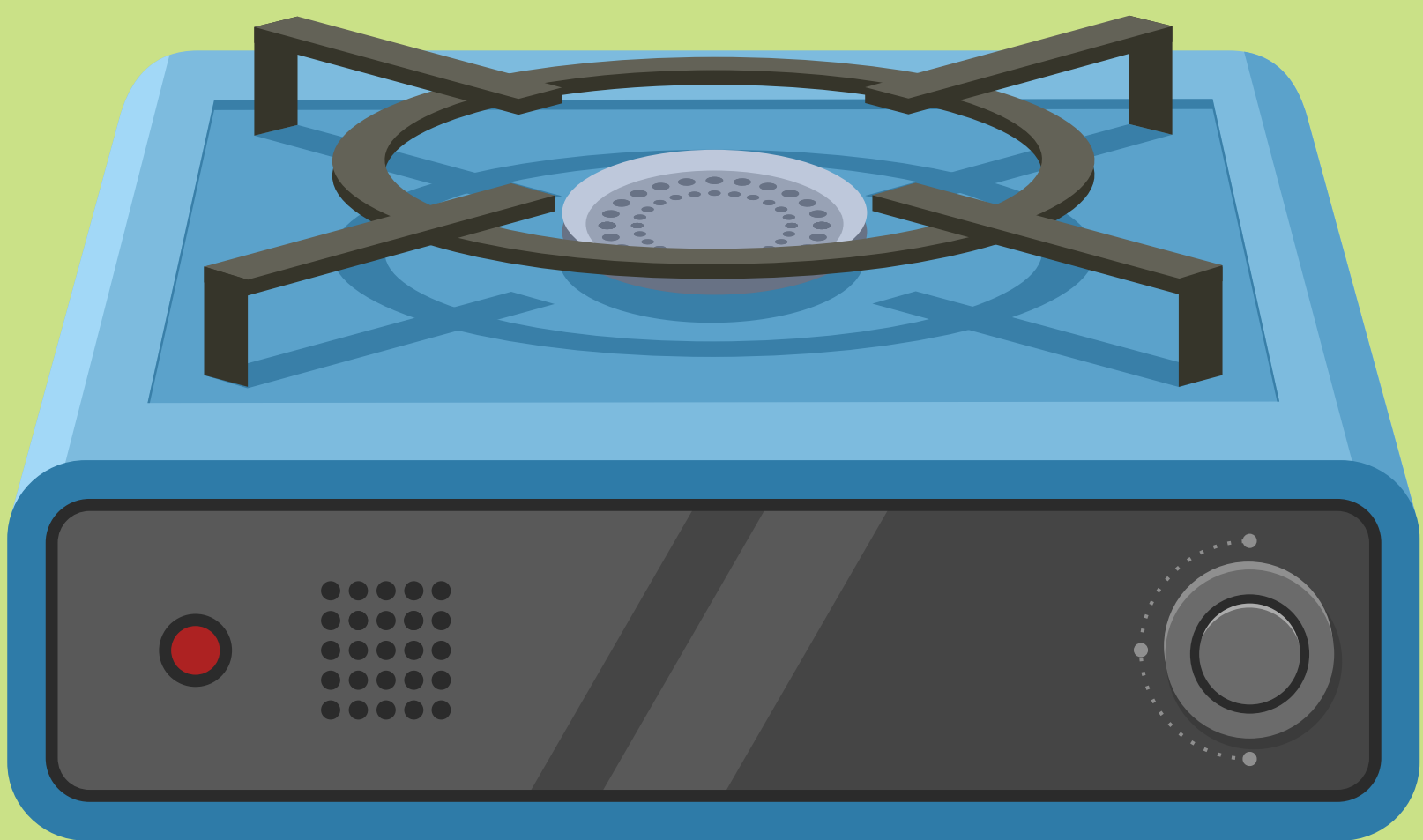
BRING PRE-PREPARED MEALS

As discussed, bringing meals that don't require cooking can eliminate the need for open fires, significantly reducing the wildfire risk.



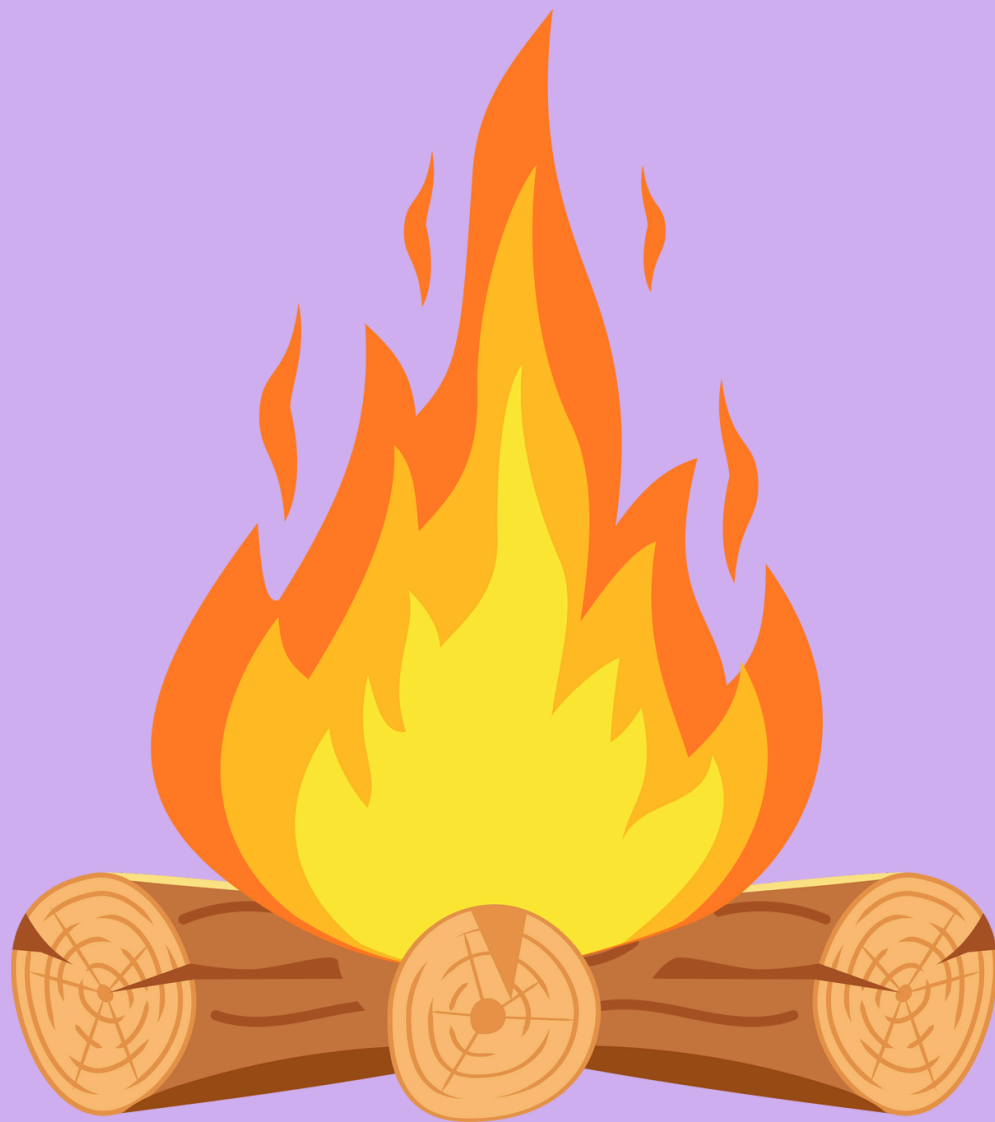
IF COOKING, USE PORTABLE STOVES

Portable camping stoves are a safer alternative to open fires, especially in dry conditions. Ensure the stove is used in a clear area away from flammable materials. Avoid cooking inside a tent. Food oils will accumulate on the tent fabric, making it inflammable. Use grills only in authorised places.



KEEP FIRES SMALL AND MANAGEABLE

If campfires are allowed, keep them small and contained within established fire pits. Never leave a fire unattended, and ensure it is completely extinguished before leaving or going to sleep.



CLEAR FLAMMABLE MATERIALS

Before lighting any fire, clear away grass, leaves, and other flammable materials from around the fire pit to prevent the fire from spreading.



DISPOSE OF CIGARETTES PROPERLY

If you smoke, always extinguish cigarettes completely and dispose of them responsibly. Never throw cigarette butts on the ground.



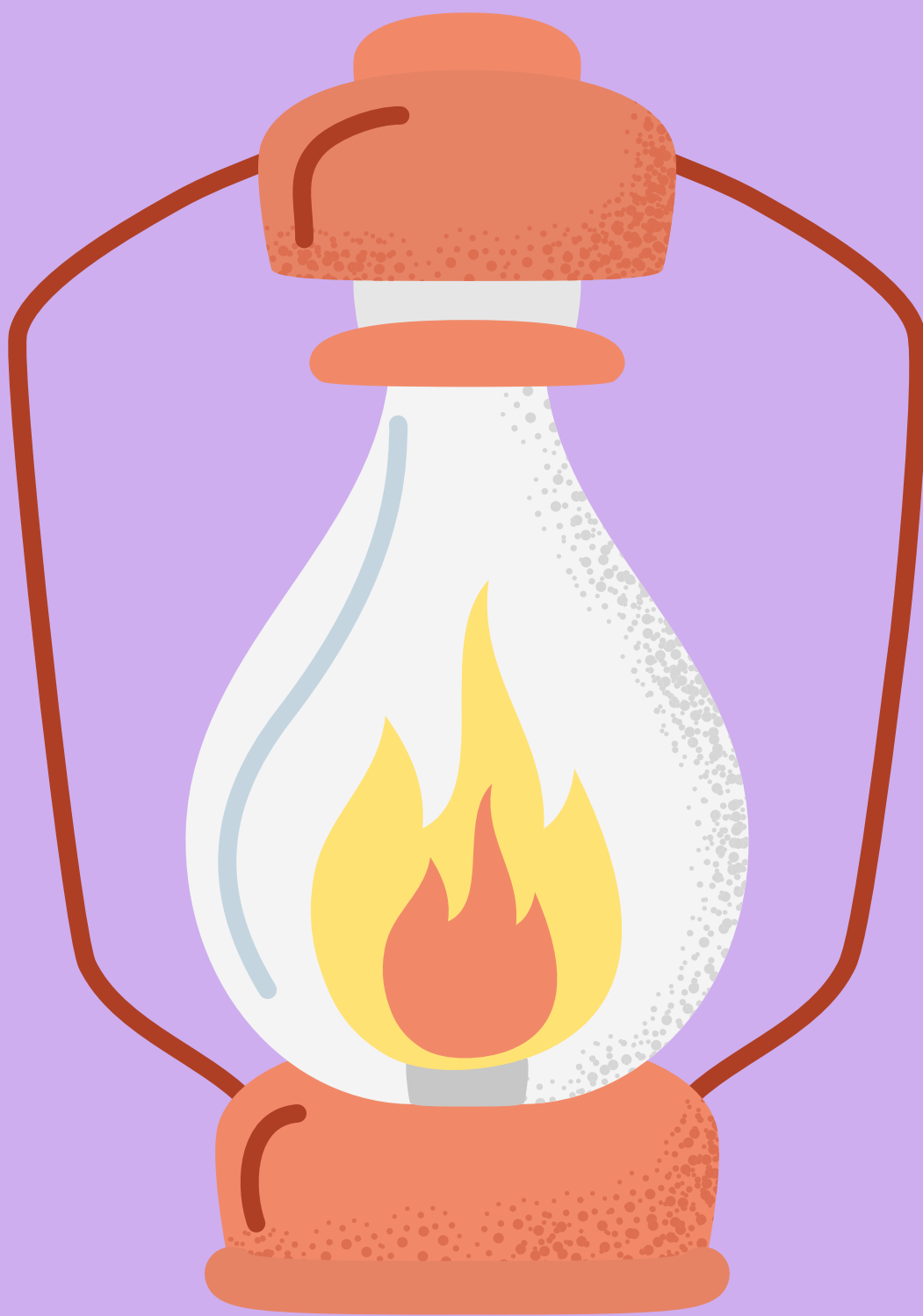
AVOID USING FIREWORKS

Fireworks can easily spark wildfires. Avoid using them, especially in wooded or grassy areas.



WHEN YOU ARE AWAY

Whenever you are going to be away, and when you go to bed, unplug any equipment and switch off gas-powered equipment (e.g. lamps).



FOLLOW LEAVE NO TRACE PRINCIPLES

Collect and bring all your rubbish with you, including food waste, and leave your campsite as you found it. Minimizing human impact on natural areas helps preserve them and reduces fire risks.



By following these tips, you can enjoy a safe and responsible camping experience that minimizes the risk of causing a wildfire, protecting both the environment and communities nearby.



DEBRIS BURNING SAFETY TIPS TO PREVENT WILDFIRES



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CHECK REGULATIONS

Before conducting any debris burning, check with local authorities or fire departments for current regulations and restrictions.



Obtain any necessary permits and follow the guidelines provided.

CHOOSE SAFE CONDITIONS



Burn debris only during safe weather conditions.

Avoid windy days, and check for any fire weather warnings or restrictions in your area.

Ideal conditions include calm winds and higher humidity.

CLEAR THE AREA

Create a safe zone around the burning area by clearing away dry leaves, grass, and other flammable materials.

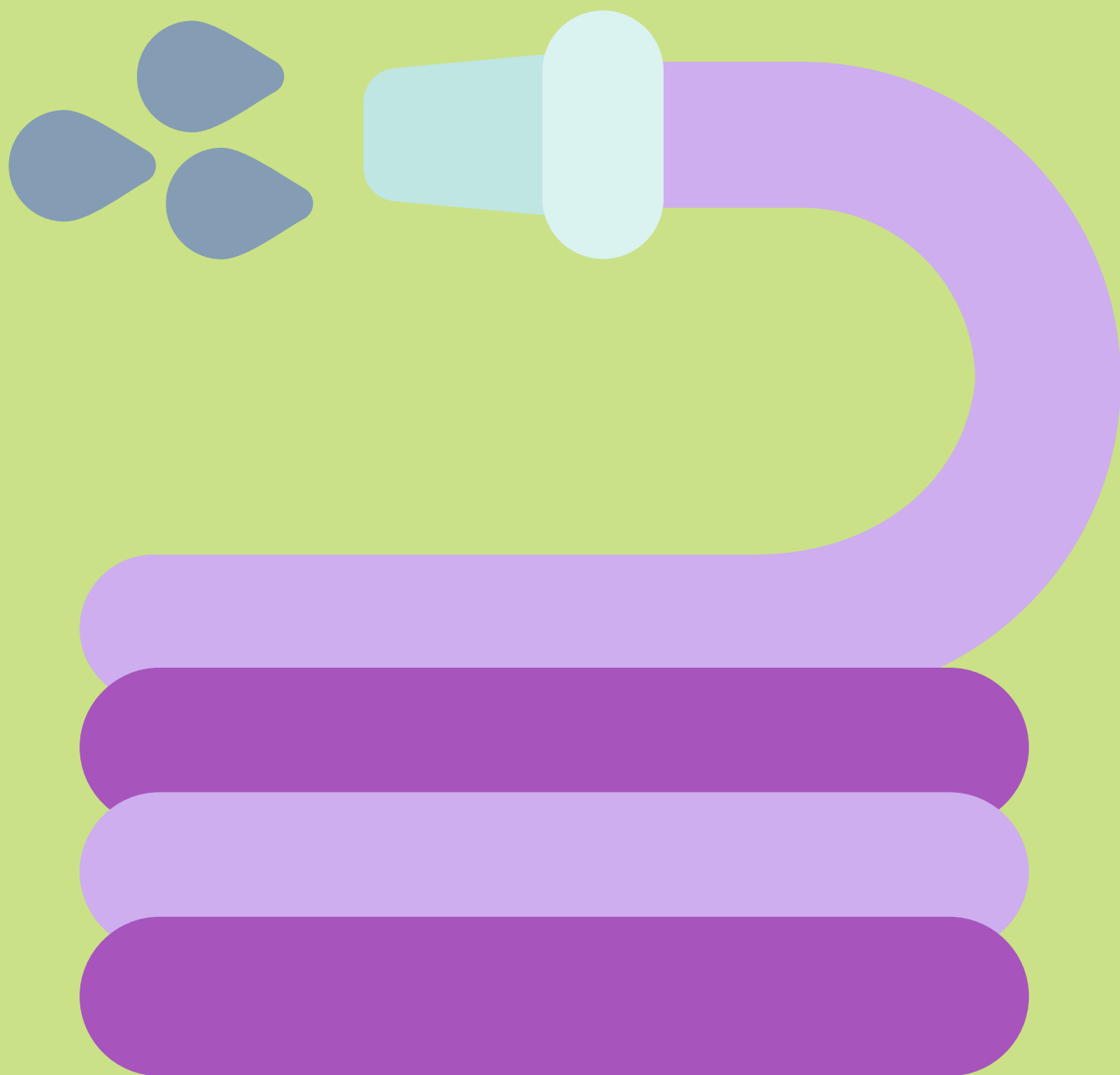
Maintain a safe distance from structures, trees, and power lines.



SUPERVISE CONSTANTLY

Never leave a debris burn unattended.

Assign a responsible person to monitor the burning at all times, and have firefighting tools, such as a hose, shovel, and rake, readily available.



PREPARE A FIREBREAK

Establish a firebreak by clearing a perimeter around the burning site.

This bare-soil area acts as a barrier, preventing the fire from spreading beyond the intended location.



START SMALL



Begin with a small burn pile and gradually add debris as the fire establishes.

This helps maintain control and reduces the risk of the fire spreading uncontrollably.

WATER SOURCE

Have a water source nearby, such as a hose or buckets of water, to quickly extinguish any flames that may escape the burn area.



Ensure the water source is easily accessible.

AVOID BURNING ON WINDY DAYS

Wind can quickly carry embers and sparks, leading to uncontrolled fires.



Refrain from burning on windy days, and be aware of wind direction during the burn to prevent sparks igniting surrounding areas.

EXTINGUISH COMPLETELY



After burning, thoroughly extinguish the fire with water.

Stir the ashes and coals to ensure no hot spots remain.

Feel the ashes with the back of your hand to confirm they are cool to the touch.

REPORT ESCAPED FIRES PROMPTLY

If the fire escapes the burn area,
report it immediately to the local fire
department.

Time is crucial in preventing the
spread of wildfires.



USE BURN BARRELS SAFELY

If using burn barrels, ensure they have proper ventilation and screens to prevent sparks from escaping.



Position the barrel on a non-combustible surface and follow safety guidelines.

FACING A WILDFIRE IN RURAL AREAS



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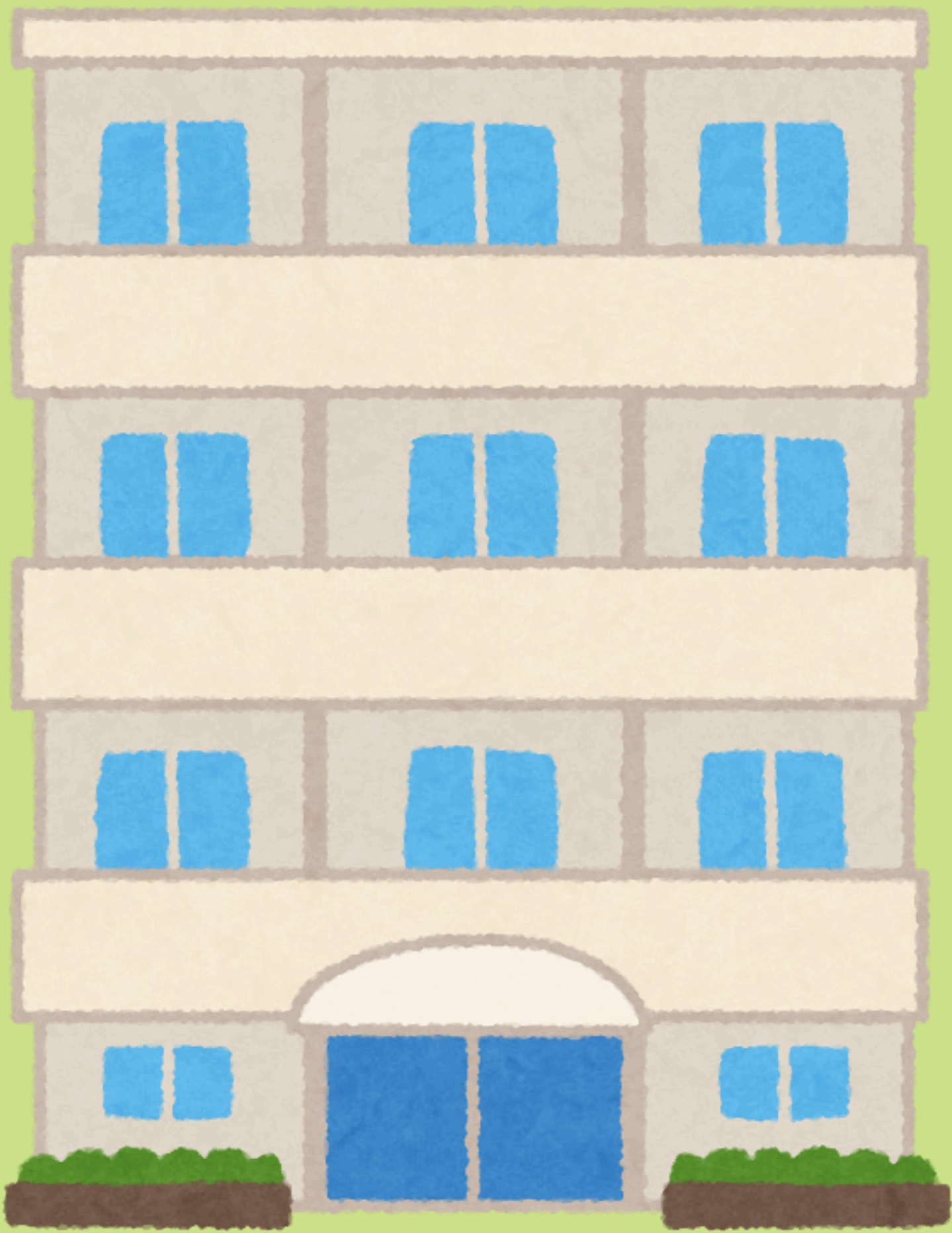
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Living, working, or visiting rural areas means there is a real danger of getting trapped or surrounded by a wildfire. If you ever find yourself in this situation, follow these simple steps to stay safe. And if you have time, also do the things to protect your home.

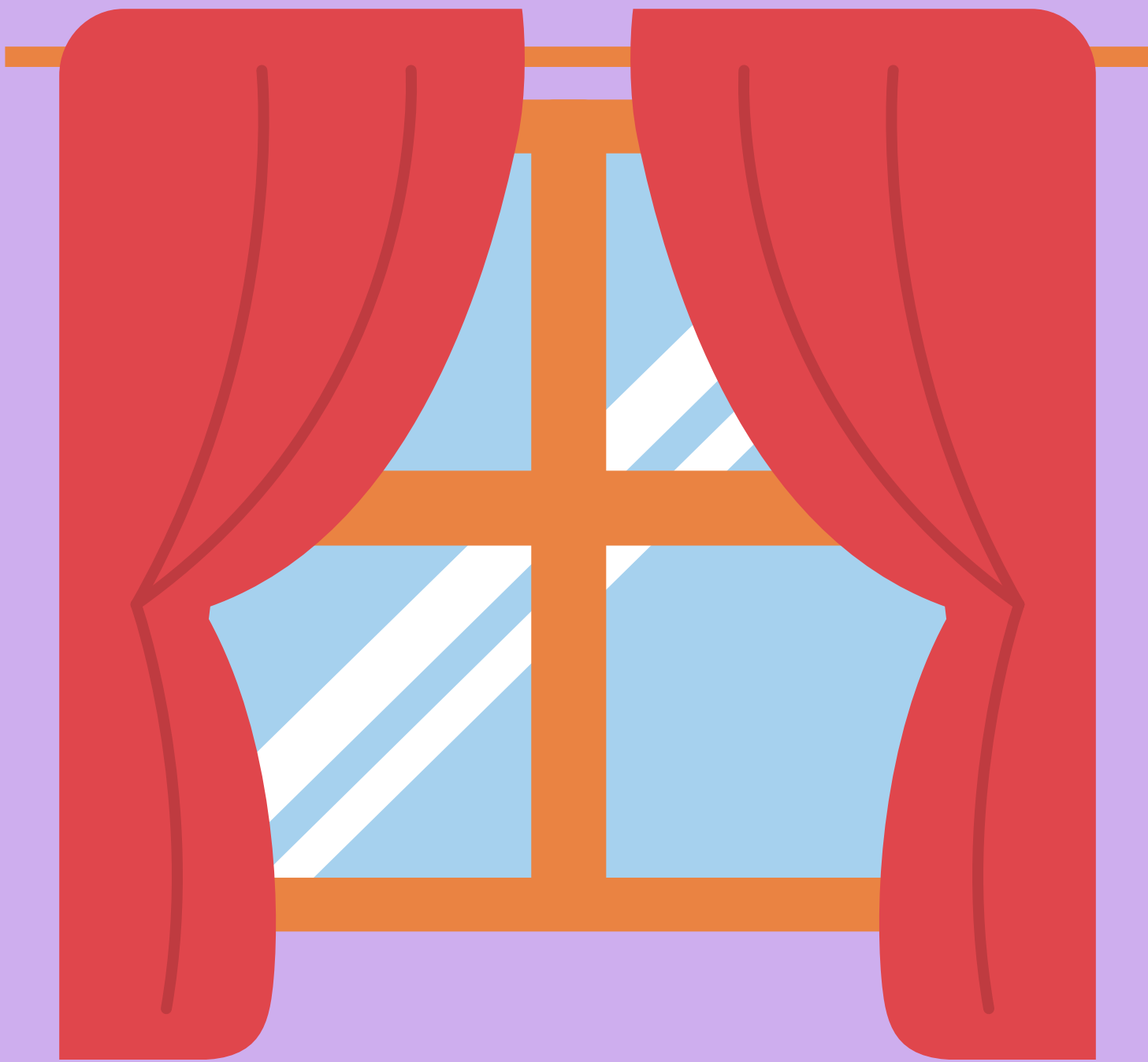


CLOSE TO A BUILDING



- Check if a nearby building can keep you safe from the fire.

- Clear away anything that can easily catch fire.



- Close all windows and doors to keep smoke and flames out.

- Move furniture away from windows so they won't catch fire from embers.



- Put a ladder by your home in case you need another way out.

- Fill up the bathtub and buckets with water.



- Use wet blankets or towels around windows and doors inside your home to stop smoke and embers.



- Spray water on your home and the plants around it. If you can, turn on any sprinklers you have and get ready for the fire.



IN OPEN SPACES



- Find a place that won't burn, like a big field or an area without many things that can catch fire. It's even better if it's a place with water, like a pond.



- Examples of good places are fields with water, parking lots, golf courses, or big ponds. These spots give you the best chance of staying safe.

- Approaching wildfires can be really loud and hot, and they make a lot of smoke. It can be scary, but remember, the strong fire will eventually pass.

Grassland usually burns for about 10 minutes, brushland for around 20 minutes, and timberland for more than an hour.



IF YOU ARE IN THE FOREST/COUNTRYSIDE



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When you are in the forest or countryside, taking preventive measures to avoid accidentally starting a wildfire is crucial. Here are several steps you can take to minimize the risk:



FOLLOW LOCAL GUIDELINES

Adhere to all local fire regulations, restrictions, and burn bans.

Even portable stoves may be banned during periods of extreme fire danger. These may vary depending on weather conditions and location.

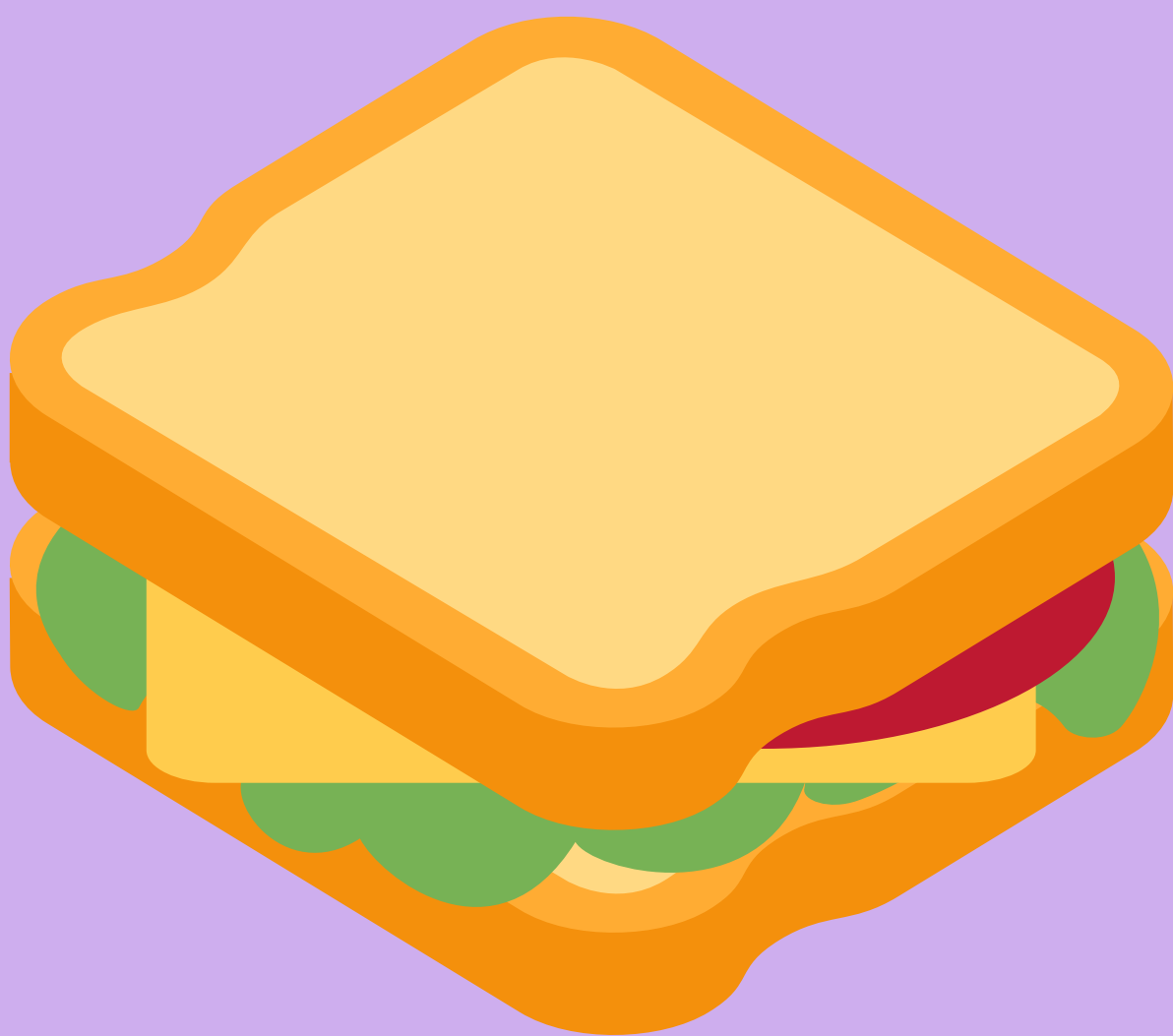


NEVER BURN RUBBISH, DRY LEAVES OR BRANCHES

Open burning, especially in dry conditions, can easily lead to uncontrollable wildfires. Always follow local regulations regarding burning and avoid it during dry or windy conditions.

BRING PRE-PREPARED MEALS

Bringing meals that don't require cooking can eliminate the need to light a fire altogether. This is especially important during dry or windy conditions when the risk of starting a wildfire is higher. Pre-prepared meals can include sandwiches, cold salads, fruits, and snacks that are ready to eat.





CAMPFIRE SAFETY

Only use designated fire pits or areas for campfires. Keep fires small and manageable. Never leave a fire unattended. Always have water or a shovel nearby to extinguish it.

Completely extinguish the fire before leaving. The ashes should be cool to the touch.



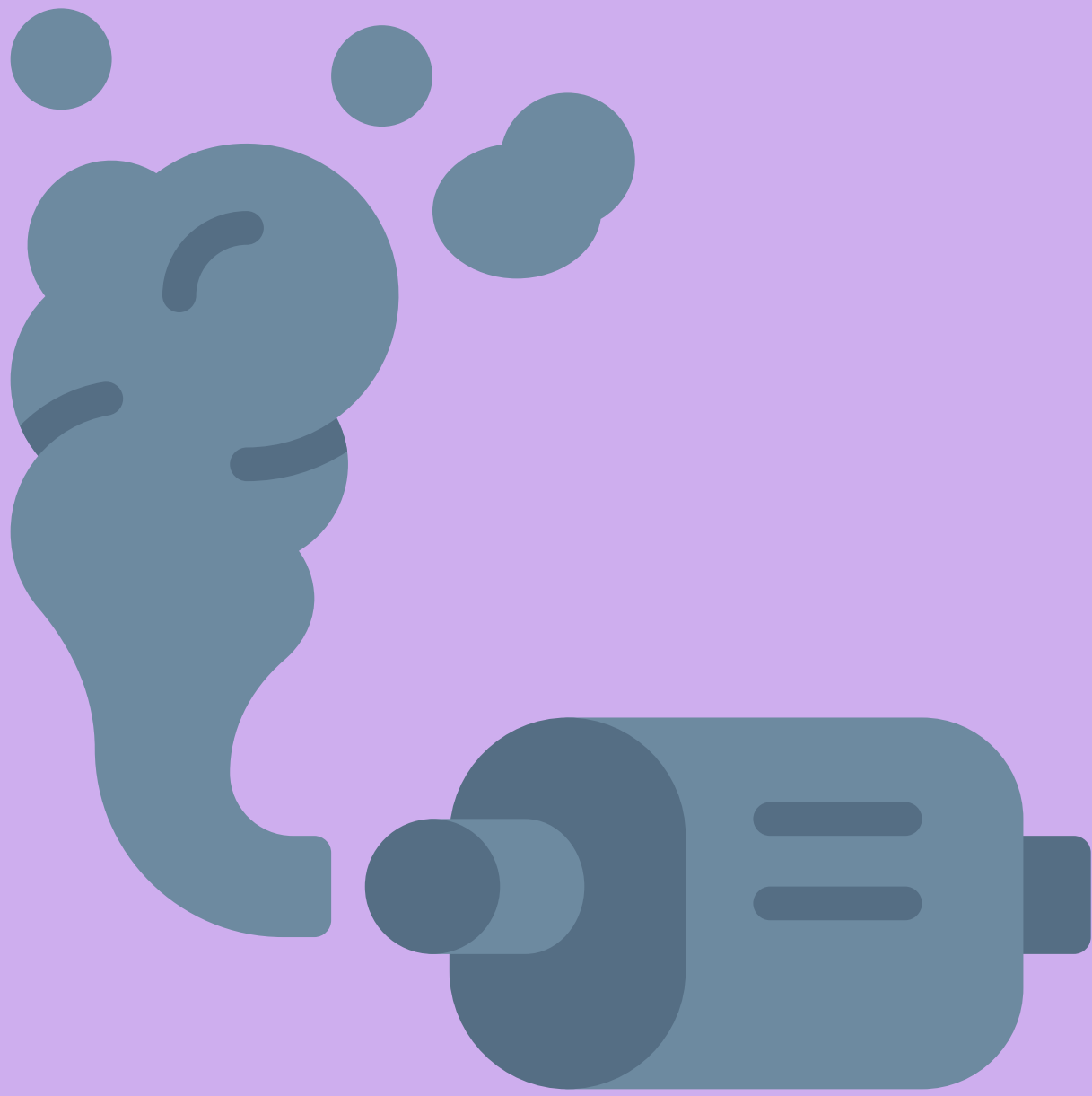
AVOID USING FIREWORKS

Fireworks can easily ignite wildfires. Avoid using them in forested areas, grasslands, or any locations where the risk of fire is high.

DISPOSE OF CIGARETTES CAREFULLY

If smoking is permitted, ensure that all cigarette butts are fully extinguished and disposed of in a designated safe container, not on the ground.





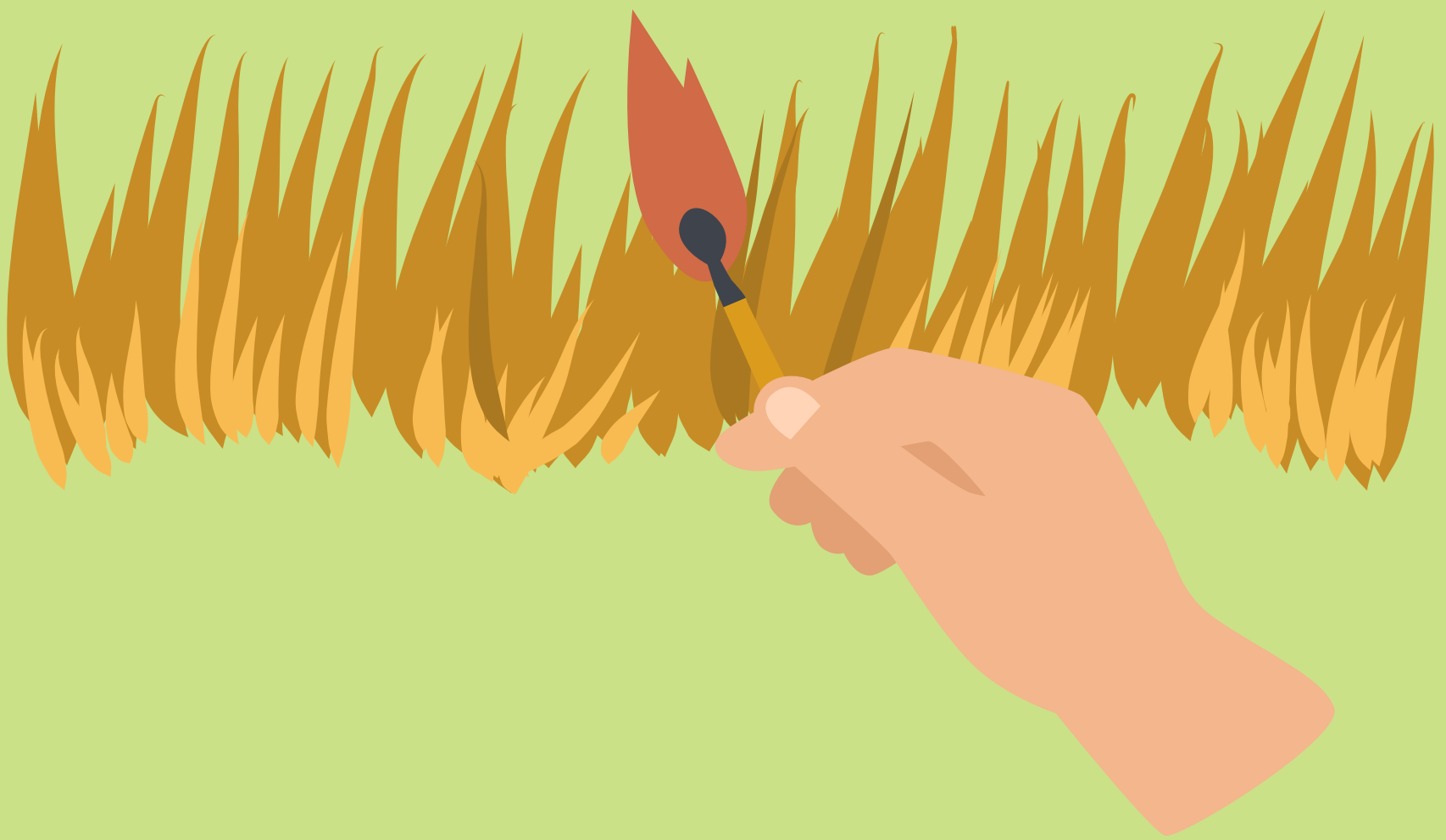
VEHICLE AND EQUIPMENT USE

Ensure vehicles and equipment are properly maintained to prevent sparks. This includes checking the exhaust system, spark arrestors, and brakes.

Avoid driving or parking vehicles on dry grass, as the hot underside can ignite the vegetation.

REPORT UNSAFE BEHAVIOR

If you notice others acting irresponsibly with fire or flammable materials, report it to authorities.



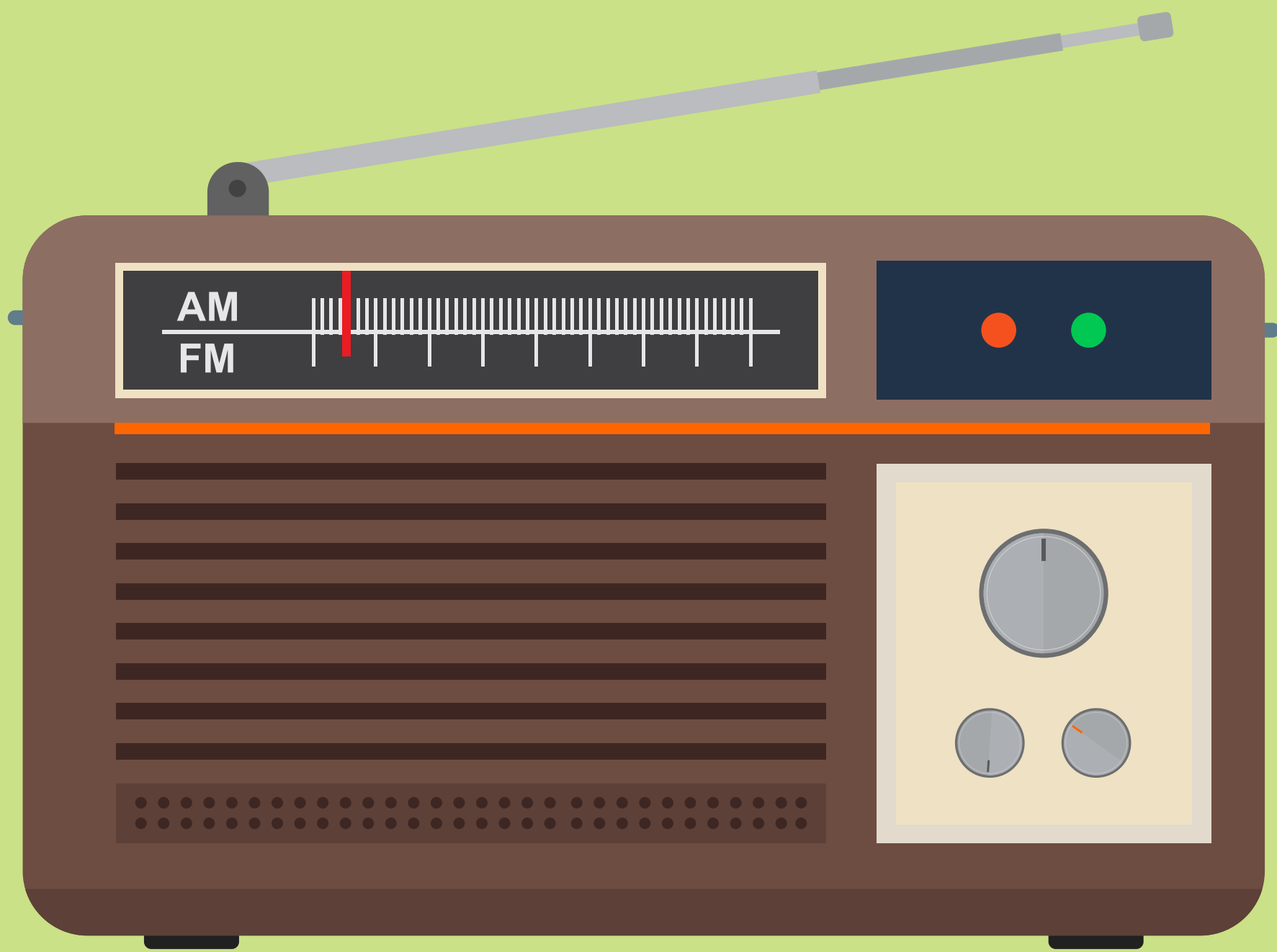
EDUCATE YOURSELF AND OTHERS

Be aware of how wildfires start and spread. Share this knowledge with family and friends to promote fire-safe behaviors in others.



STAY INFORMED

About local fire conditions and weather patterns.



PLAN AND PREPARE

Have an emergency plan and supplies ready in case a wildfire occurs. This includes knowing evacuation routes and having an emergency kit.

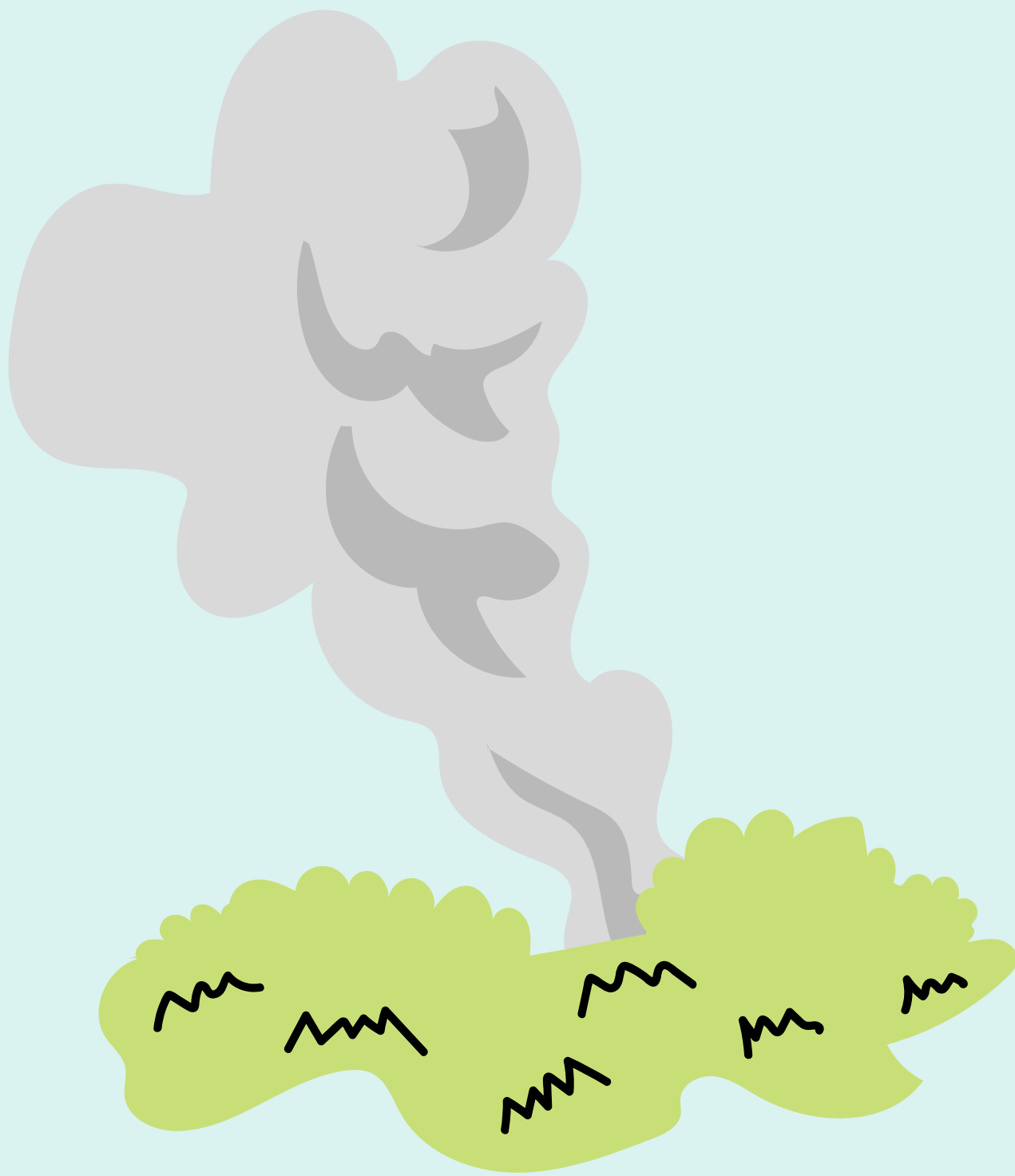




Safety First

By following these precautions, you can significantly reduce the risk of accidentally starting a wildfire and help protect the natural environment, yourself, and others.

IF YOU NOTICE A WILDFIRE



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If you notice a wildfire, it's critical to act quickly and responsibly to ensure your safety and that of others.

Here's what you should do:



STAY CALM AND ASSESS THE SITUATION

Determine the fire's proximity and whether you are in immediate danger. If you are, prioritize your safety above all else.

ALERT AUTHORITIES

IMMEDIATELY

Immediately contact the Fire Department / Security Forces by calling 112 (European Emergency Number). Provide them with detailed information about:



- the location and the exact point where you are
- the direction of fire,
- the kind of vegetation that is burning



EVACUATE IF NECESSARY

If the fire is close to your location, evacuate immediately. Do not wait for an official evacuation order if you feel your safety is at risk.

Follow pre-established evacuation routes and procedures if available.

INFORM OTHERS

Alert neighbours or anyone in the vicinity of the fire, especially if they may not be aware of it, so they can also prepare to evacuate or take necessary precautions.





PREPARE YOUR HOME (IF TIME ALLOWS)

If you have time and it's safe to do so, prepare your home by closing all windows and doors, removing flammable materials from around your house, and turning on lights to make your home more visible through smoke.

FOLLOW OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION

Tune in to local news channels, emergency services social media, or a reliable online source for updates on the wildfire and evacuation orders. Adhere to all instructions given by local authorities.





TAKE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

Wear protective clothing, including long sleeves, trousers, and a mask to protect against smoke inhalation if you are in or near a wildfire area.



Do Not Attempt to Extinguish a Large Wildfire: Without proper training and equipment, trying to extinguish a large wildfire is extremely dangerous. Leave this task to the professionals.



Leave the Area: Stay calm and try to evacuate the area against the wind. Go to an area clear of vegetation.



Stay Away from Affected Areas:

Once evacuated, do not return to the affected area until authorities declare it safe.

Entering a wildfire area can put you and rescue workers at risk.

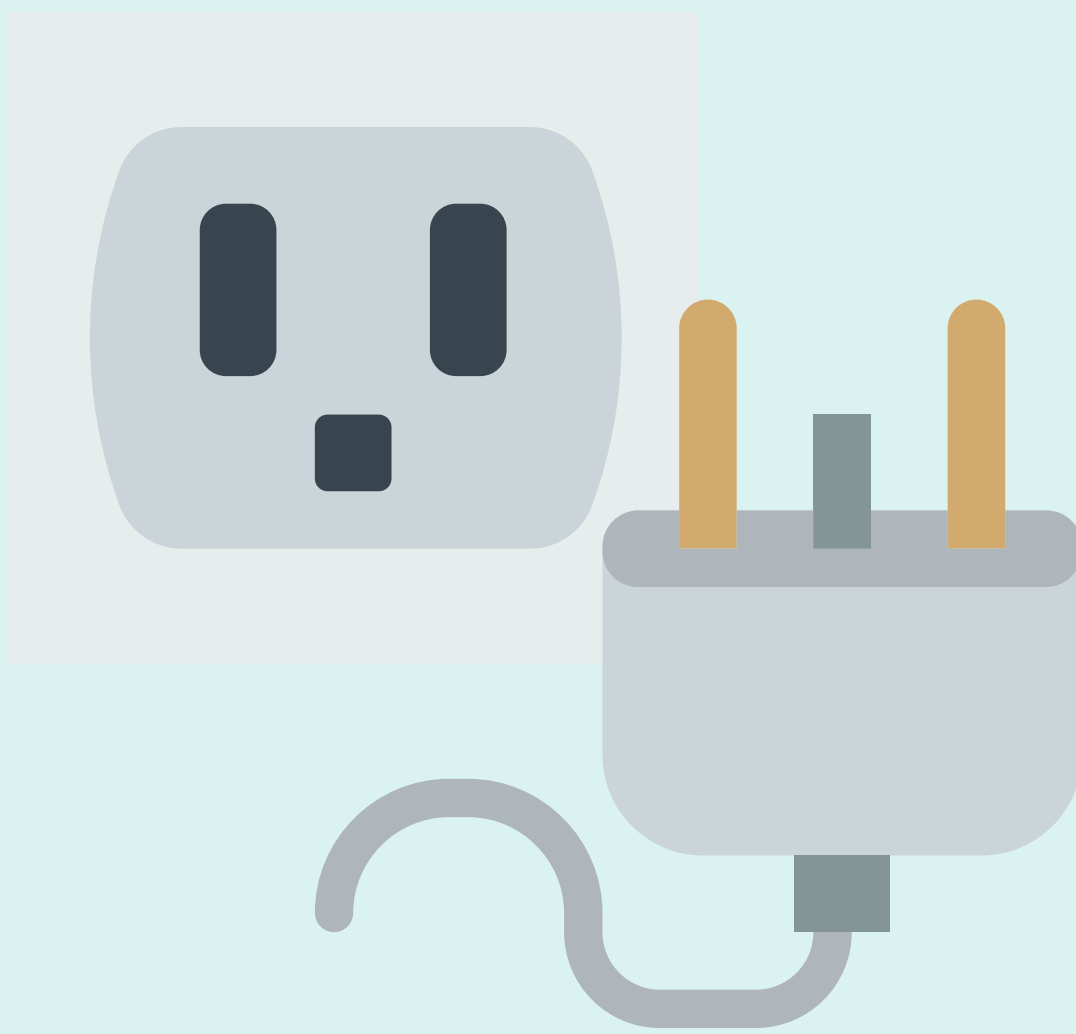


Offer Help if You Can: Once safe, consider offering help to those affected by the wildfire through donations or volunteer work with local relief organizations.

Remember, the most important thing is to ensure your safety and that of those around you. Wildfires can spread rapidly and unpredictably, so it's vital to act promptly and follow the guidance of local authorities.



TIPS FOR SAFE ELECTRIC EQUIPMENT USE AND MAINTENANCE TO PREVENT WILDFIRES

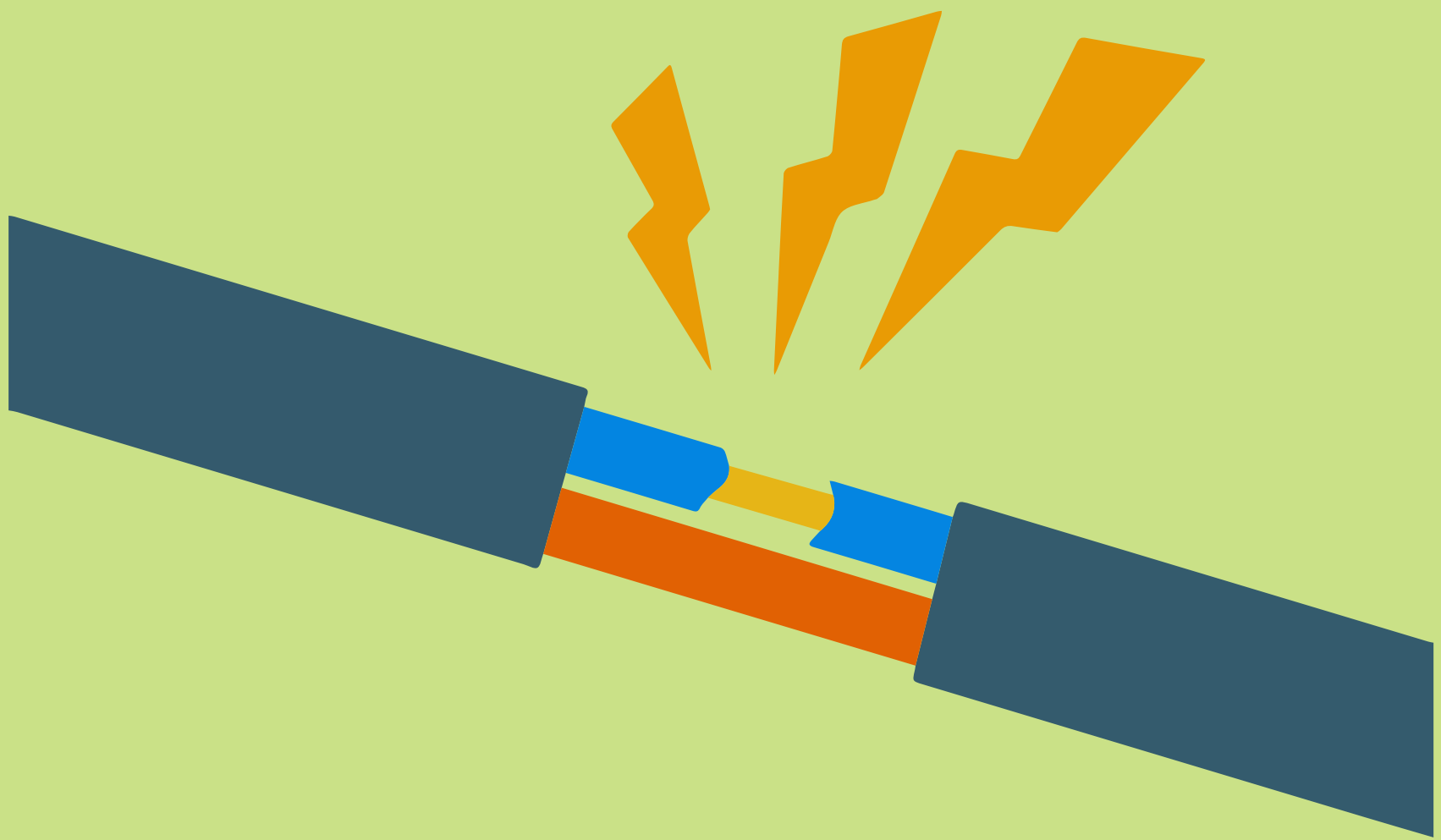


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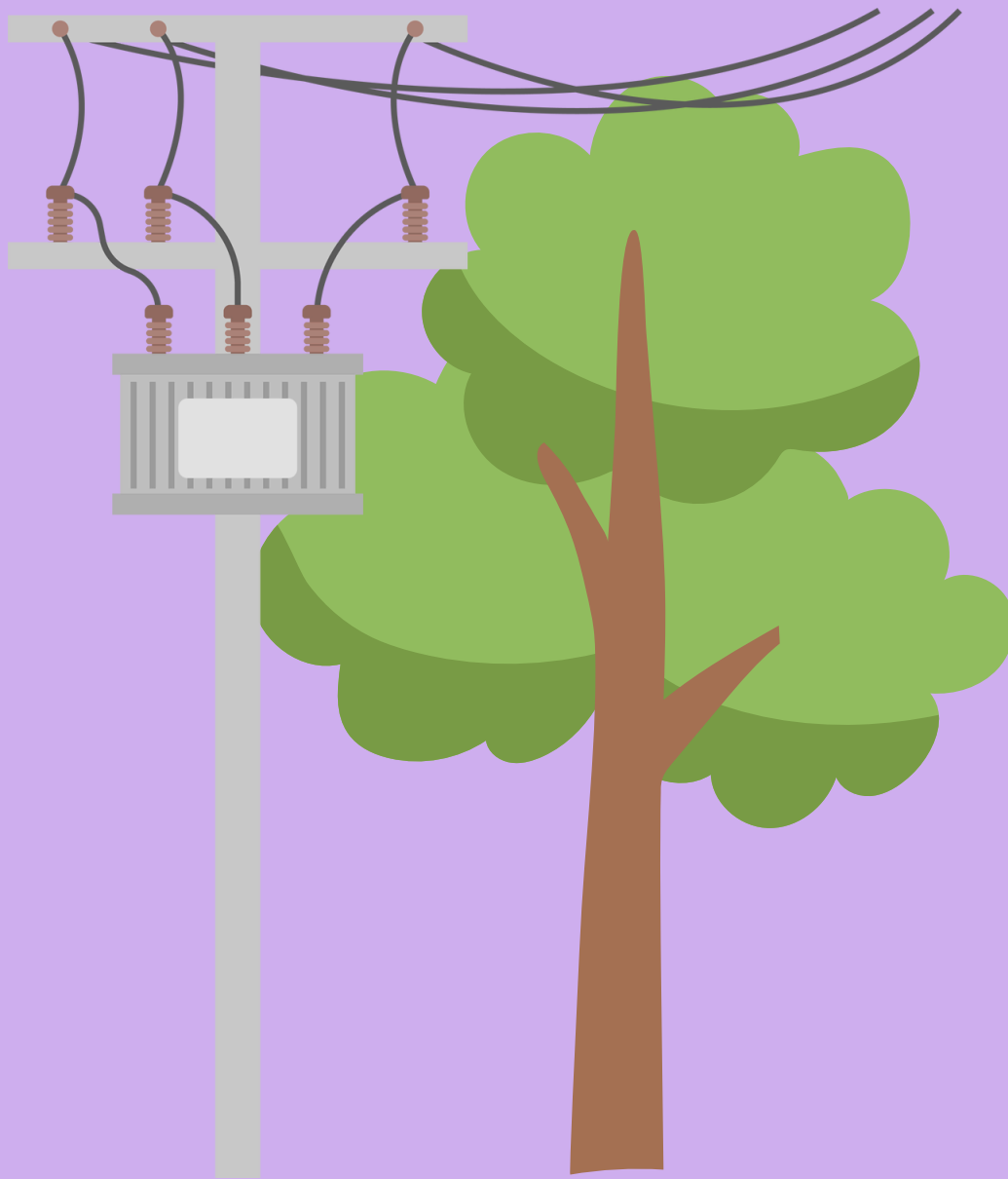


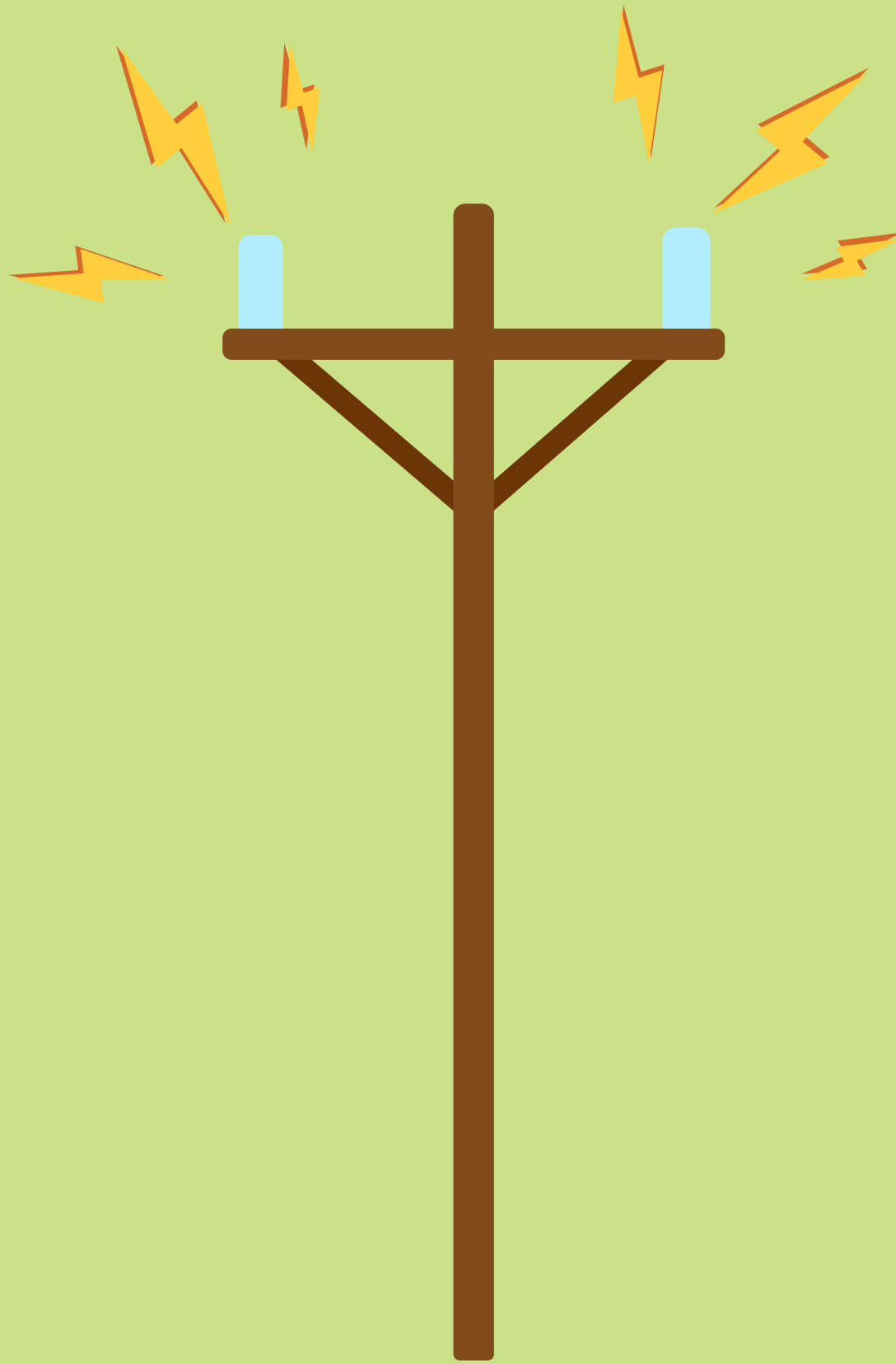
REGULAR INSPECTIONS

Conduct regular inspections of your electrical equipment, such as power lines, outlets, and electrical panels. Look for signs of wear, damage, or exposed wires.

KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE

Ensure that electrical equipment, especially power lines, is kept at a safe distance from trees, vegetation, and other flammable materials. Trim any overhanging branches to reduce the risk of contact with power lines.





REPORT ISSUES PROMPTLY

If you notice any damaged or sparking power lines, immediately report it to the relevant authorities or your utility provider. Quick action can prevent potential fire hazards.

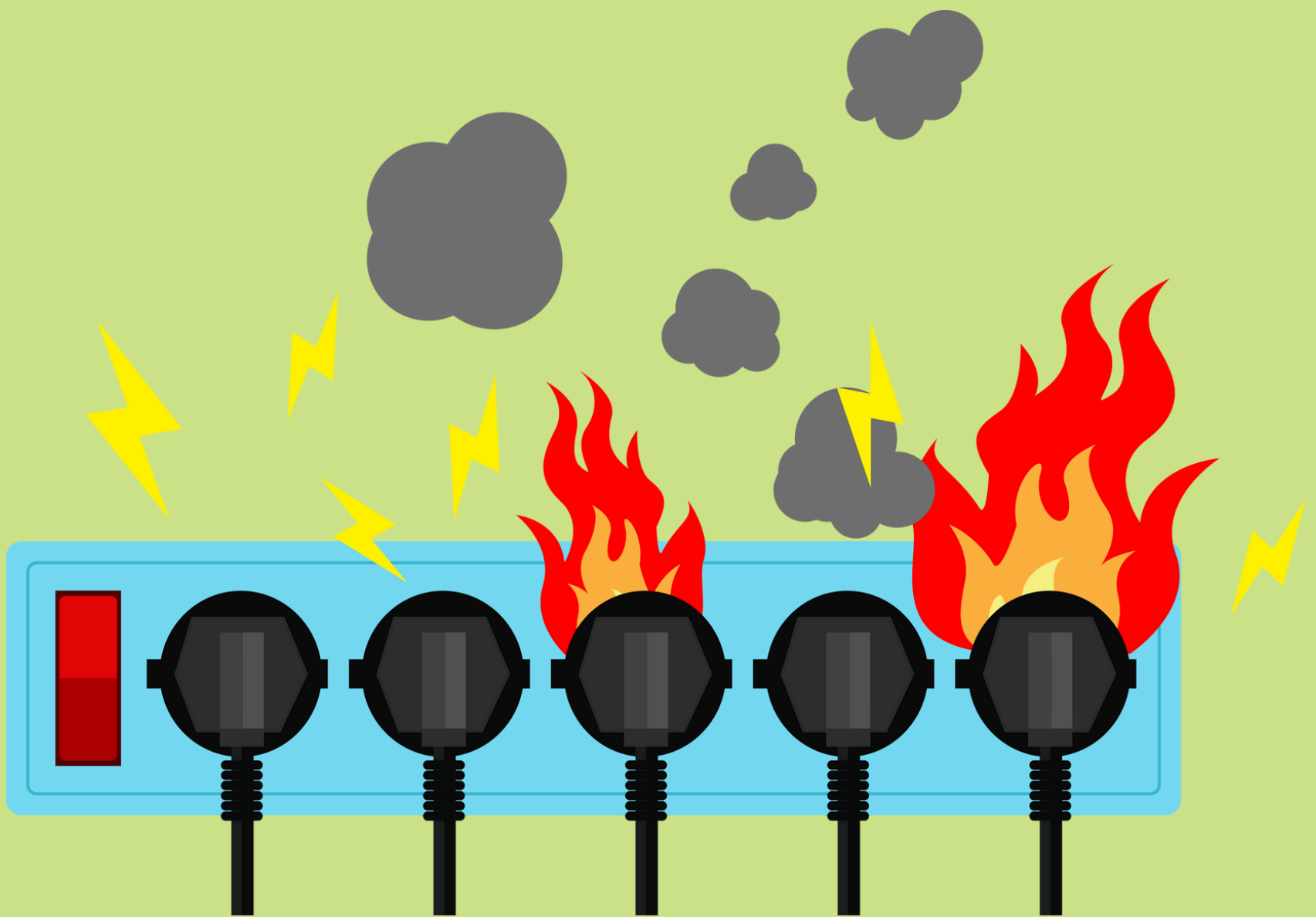


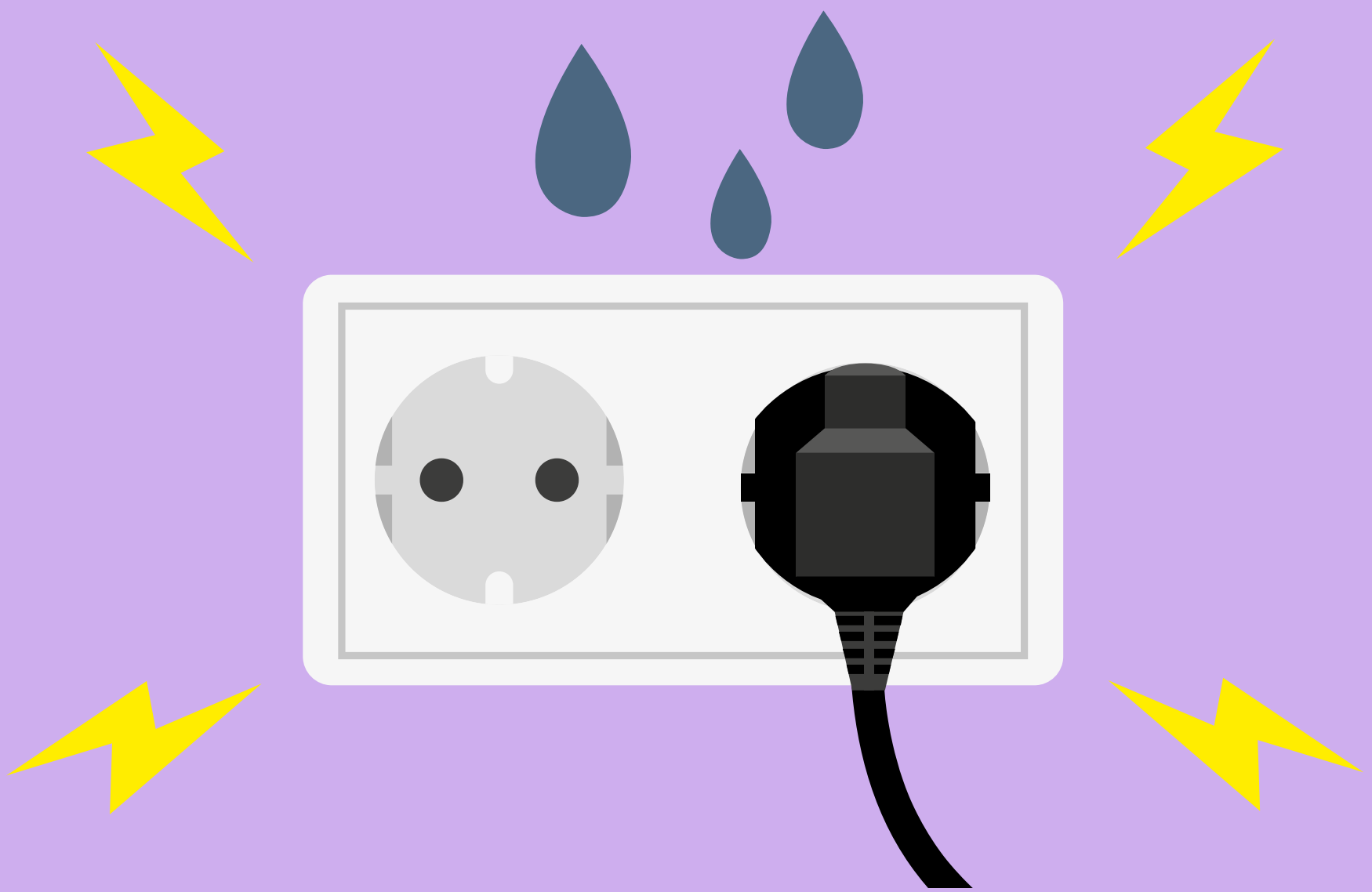
PROPER DISPOSAL OF GARDEN WASTE

Dispose of garden waste, such as leaves and branches, away from power lines. Burning garden waste close to power lines can pose a significant fire risk.

AVOID OVERLOADING CIRCUITS

Do not overload electrical circuits, as this can lead to overheating and potential fire hazards. Use power strips and electrical outlets responsibly, following recommended load capacities.

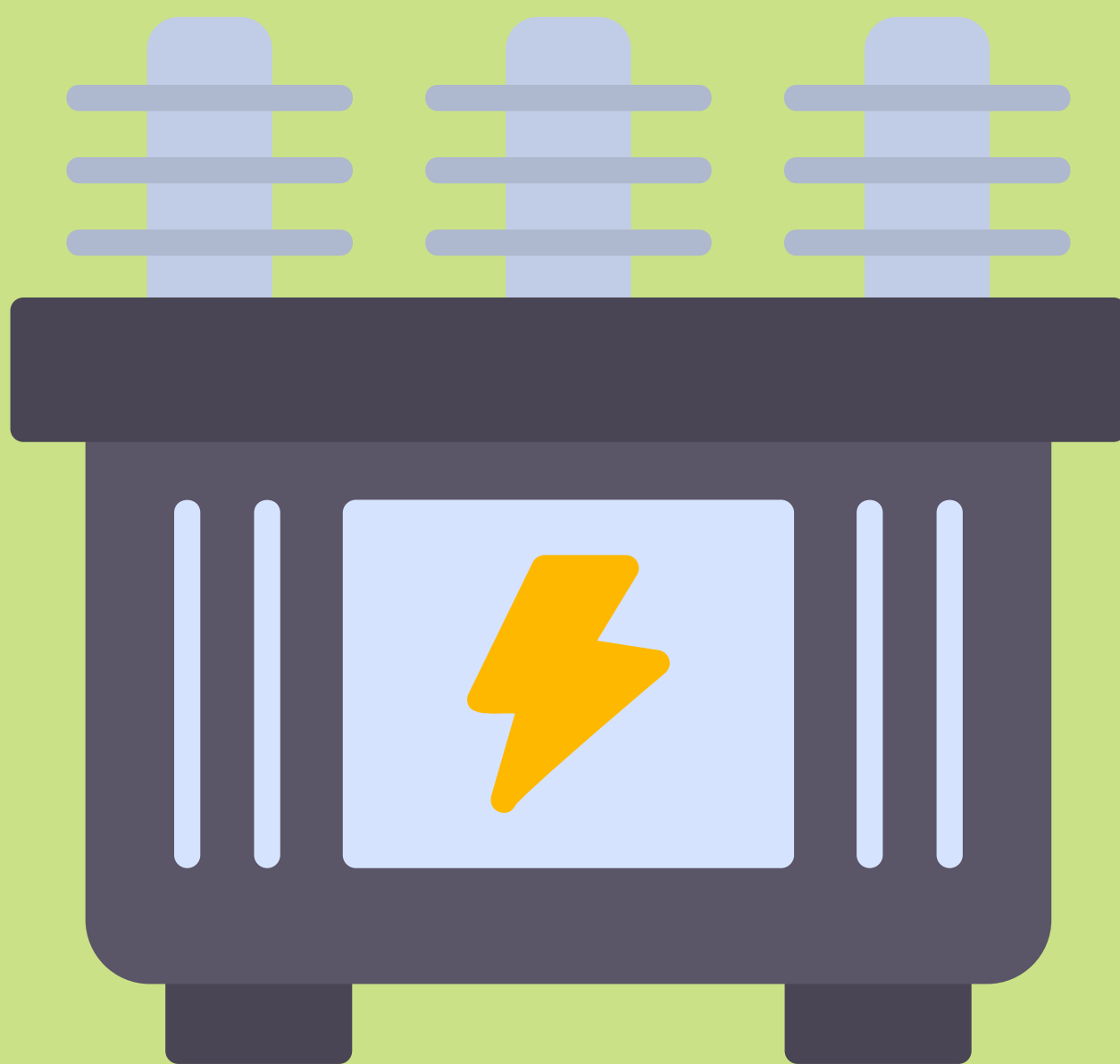




SECURE OUTDOOR OUTLETS

Install weatherproof covers on outdoor electrical outlets to protect them from the elements.

This prevents moisture from causing electrical issues that could lead to fires.



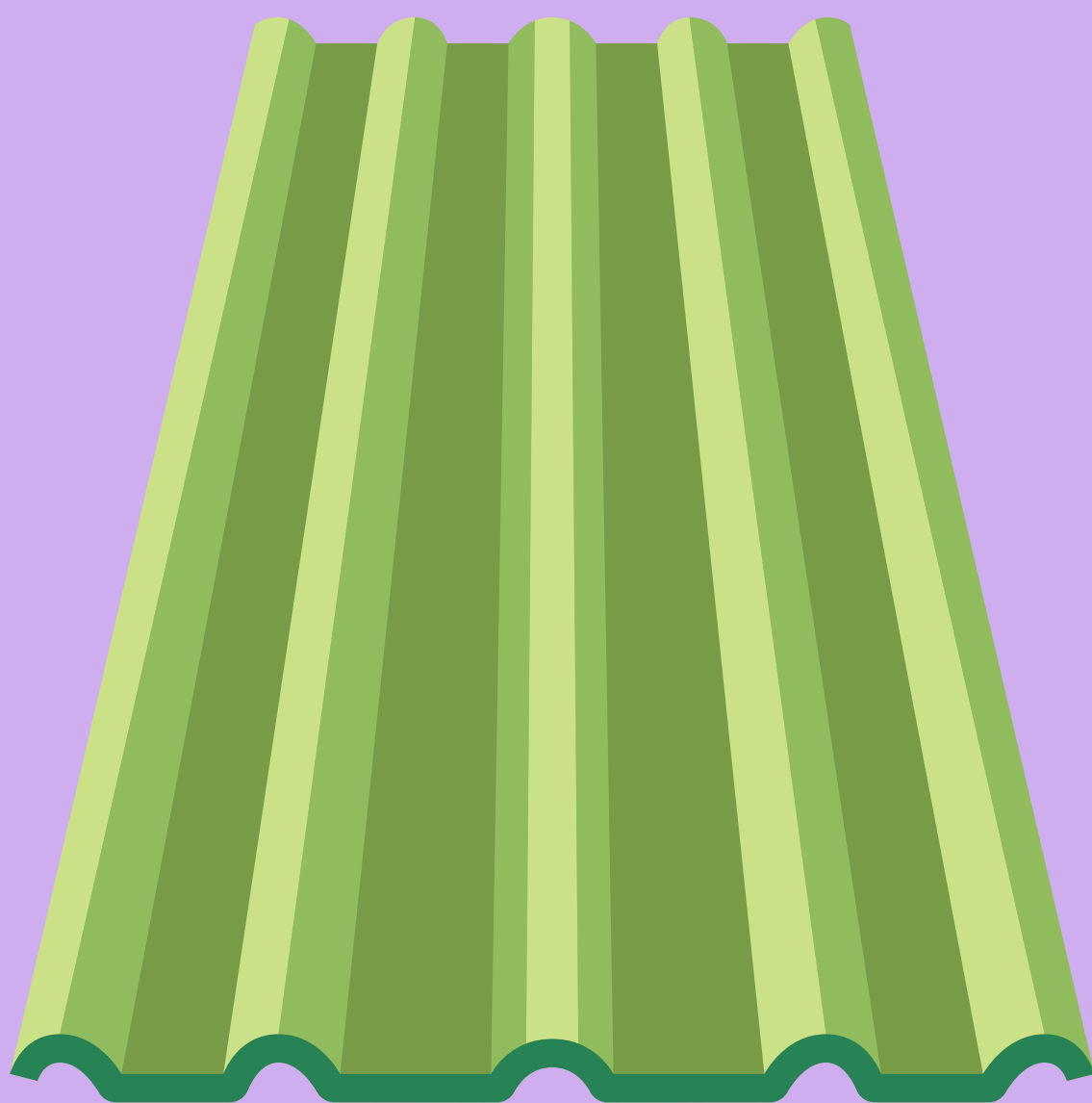
CLEAR VEGETATION AROUND TRANSFORMERS

If you have electrical transformers on your property, ensure that vegetation is cleared around them.

This helps prevent potential fires caused by contact between plants and electrical equipment.

USE FIRE-RESISTANT MATERIALS

When building or renovating, consider using fire-resistant materials for structures and outdoor installations. This can help reduce the risk of fires spreading in the event of an electrical malfunction.



PROPER GENERATOR USE

If using generators during power outages, follow all safety guidelines provided by the manufacturer. Keep generators in well-ventilated areas away from flammable materials and never connect them directly to home wiring without proper equipment.



FOREST FIRE SMART LANDSCAPE



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A "Forest Fire Smart Landscape" refers to a strategic approach in landscaping and land management that reduces the vulnerability of an area to wildfires.



This concept is part of broader fire-smart or fire-wise community planning efforts that aim to mitigate the risks and impacts of wildfires through various landscaping and building techniques. Here's an overview of what a Forest Fire Smart Landscape involves:

CLEARING AND FUEL REDUCTION

Clearing Vegetation

Removing or thinning flammable vegetation and other materials that could fuel a wildfire. This includes trimming bushes, pruning trees, and clearing out underbrush.



Regular Maintenance

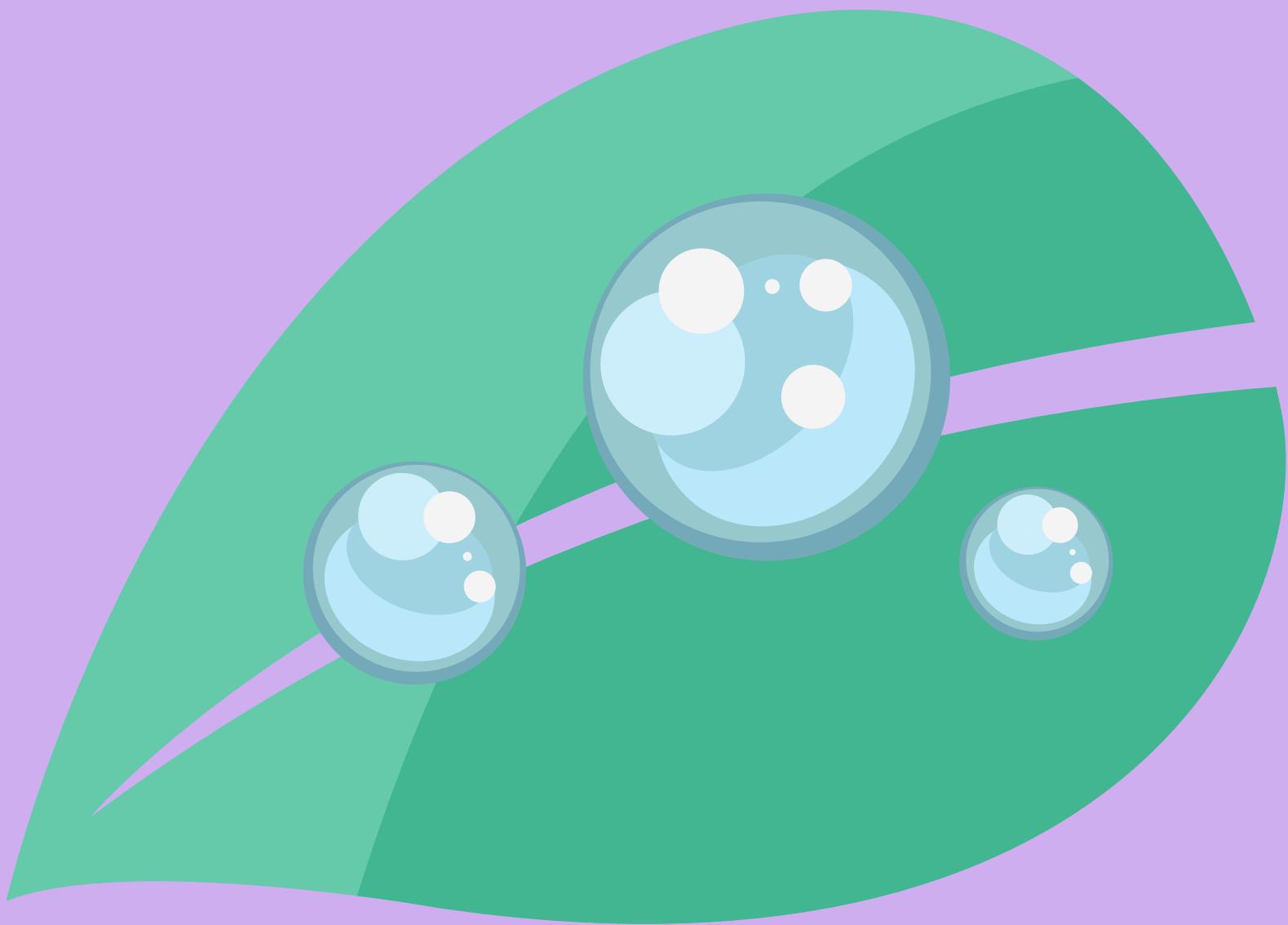
Keeping the landscape clean and free of debris such as fallen leaves, branches, and dead plants that can easily catch fire.



CHOICE OF PLANTS

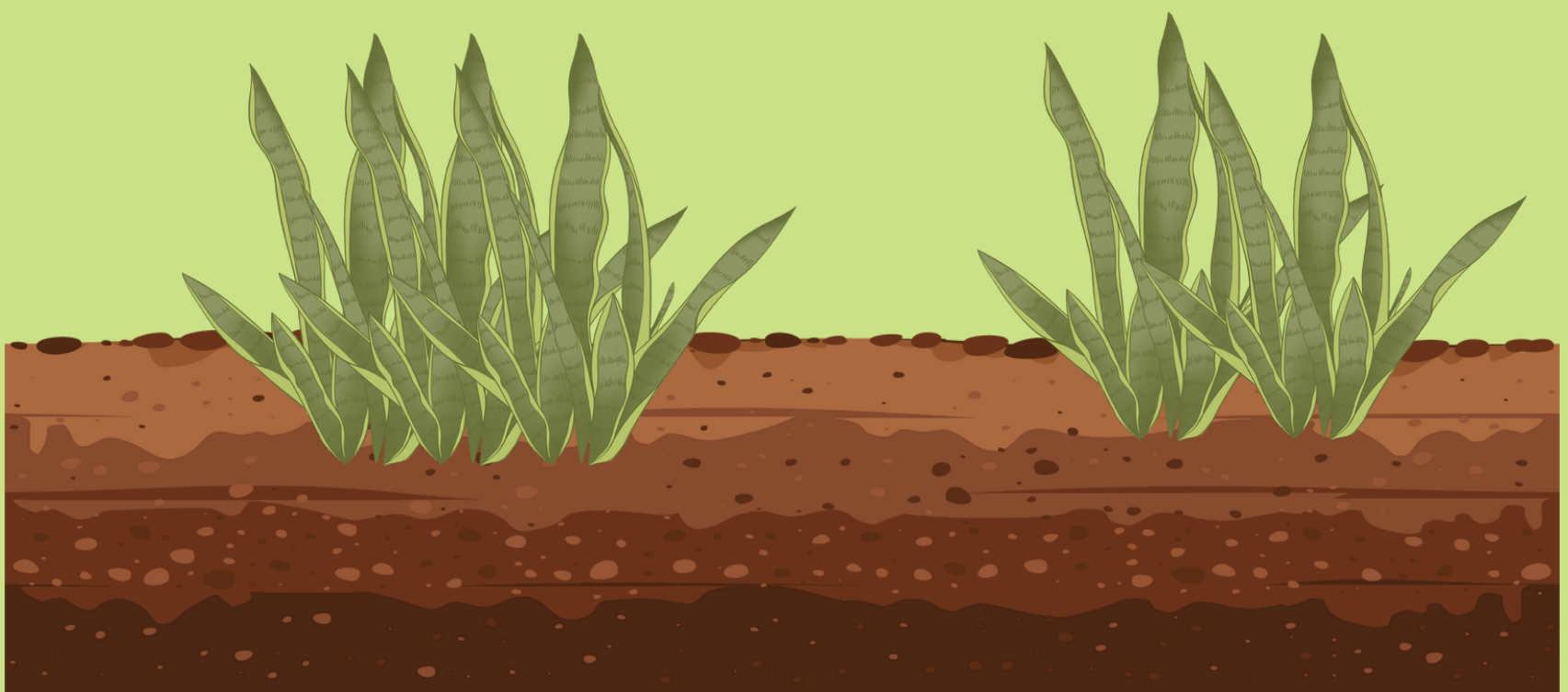
Fire-Resistant Planting

Selecting and planting fire-resistant plants that are less likely to ignite from a stray ember. Some plants have higher moisture content in their leaves, non-resinous material, and are less flammable.



Strategic Plant Placement

Arranging plants in a way that minimizes the spread of fire. This can involve creating firebreaks or spaces between groups of plants to slow or stop the fire from spreading.



ZONING

Defensible Space

Creating zones around structures where vegetation is carefully controlled to reduce the risk of fire reaching the buildings. This space is typically divided into different zones with varying degrees of thinning, removal, and replacement of vegetation.



Access Points

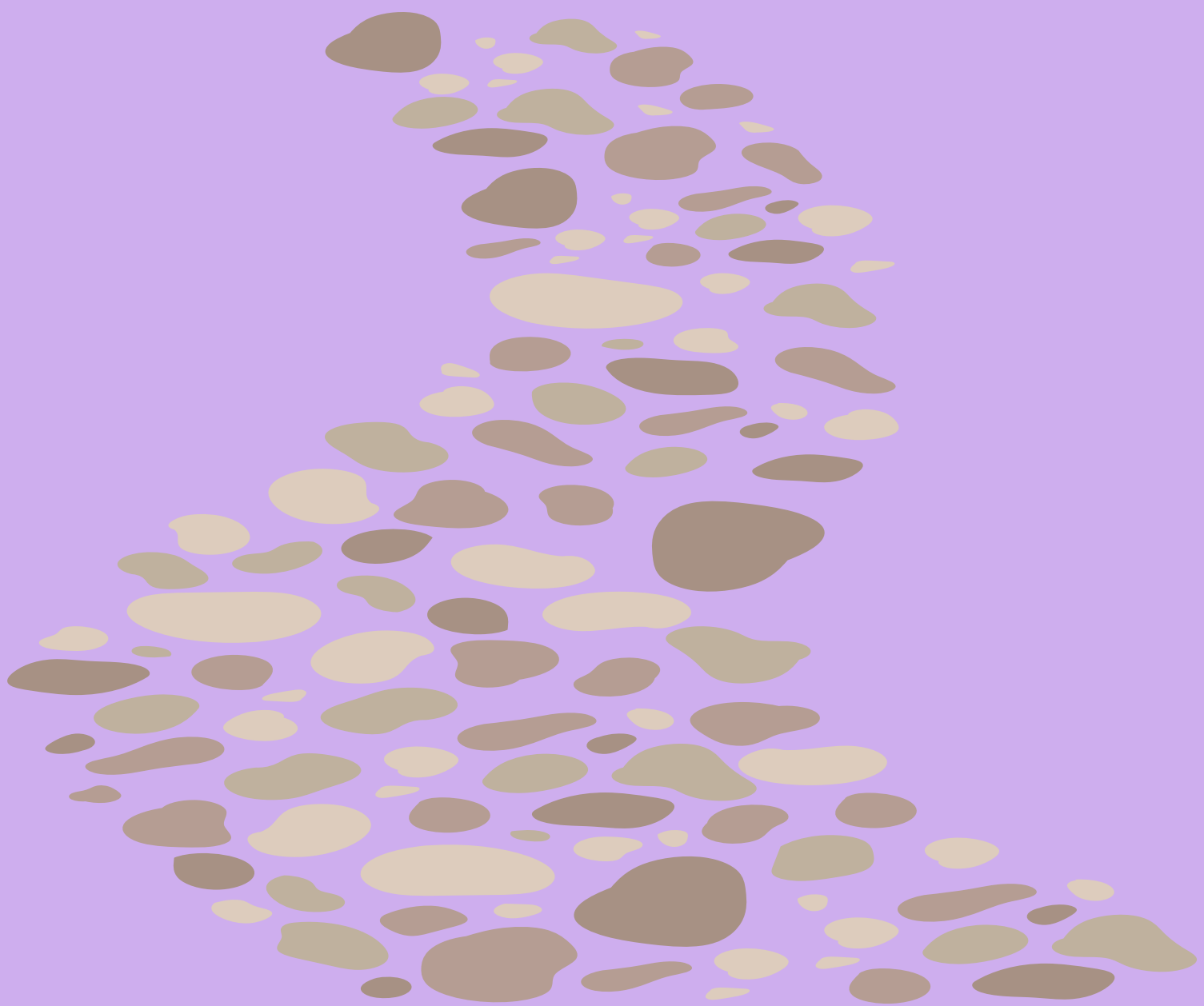
Ensuring there are clear access routes for firefighting equipment and personnel, which can be crucial during a fire emergency.



MATERIALS AND DESIGN

Fire-Safe Materials

Using non-flammable or fire-resistant materials for paths, fences, decks, and mulch. For instance, gravel mulch and stone pathways are preferable to wood chips and pine straw.



Irrigation Systems

Installing and maintaining proper irrigation systems to keep vegetation sufficiently hydrated to resist the ignition and spread of fires.



COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Education and Training

Educating the community about fire-smart practices and the importance of maintaining a landscape that can resist wildfires.



Coordinated Efforts

Working together with local fire departments, forestry services, and neighbours to ensure a unified approach to wildfire preparedness.





Implementing a Forest Fire Smart Landscape is a proactive measure that can significantly mitigate the risk of wildfire damage. It is especially critical in regions prone to such natural disasters, helping to protect homes, businesses, and ecosystems from the destructive forces of wildfires.