



Firewood Q & A's

Many homeowners consider adding a wood burning appliance as their main heating source. Heating with wood is a personal preference. Choosing to heat with wood is a lifestyle choice. It takes a lot of work to prepare firewood for the burning season. You need to learn how to maintain a wood burning appliance properly. You will need enough room outdoors to store a season's worth of firewood and also enough space indoors to store enough firewood for a few days. Many new wood burners have a lot of questions regarding firewood. Here are a few of the most frequently asked questions and the answers.

How do you properly season firewood for best burning?



Seasoning firewood removes the moisture from the wood. It is not safe to burn wood that has not been properly seasoned; it can cause many problems with your wood burning appliance. To season firewood properly it will need to be split and stacked outdoors. Make sure to stack your firewood in an area that receives direct sunlight and plenty of air flow. Stack fire wood at least 6" off of the ground so there is proper air flow through the whole stack. Firewood [Racks](#) are the perfect solution for keeping firewood neat and tidy while letting it season properly.

How long does it take "green" firewood to dry?



For firewood to be completely dry or seasoned you should let it sit for at least 6 months or a full season prior to the season during which it will be burnt. You want the firewood's moisture content to be about 20% once it reaches this level it will not get any drier. It would not matter if you let it set for 1 season or 5. Wood type, weather conditions, air flow and more can all play a role in how long it will take for your firewood to be considered fully dry. If you are purchasing firewood makes sure and ask when it was cut and split. You want at least last season's firewood.

Can I visibly tell if the wood is seasoned properly?



There are a few things that you can look for to ensure that the wood you are going to be purchasing is seasoned properly. The firewood will be split and stacked in neat rows. The ends of the pieces will be darkened with cracks or splits. It will be lightweight and will make a “clunk” sound when two pieces are beat together. Green wood is much heavier, the ends will look cleaner, and it will make a dull “thud” sound when hit together. However the best way to be 100% certain that the firewood that you are purchasing will be ready for burning is to purchase the season before it will be needed and allow it to sit on your property where you are in control of it being seasoned.

What is the difference between kiln dried and seasoned firewood?



heat and rain.

Kiln dried wood is wood that is dried in an industrial kiln. The process dries the wood completely to a moisture content of approximately 10%. It kills any insects that may have been living in the wood, and produces clean and great looking firewood that is extremely easy to light and keep burning. The seasoning method of drying wood is to naturally allow the wood to dry or season over the course of six to twelve months or more by splitting the wood and allowing it to gradually dry outdoors in the sun, wind,

What species of wood splits the easiest?



If you decide to purchase firewood in the pulp cord or cut your own then you will also be [splitting](#) and stacking your own firewood. The easiest woods to split are going to be wood types that have straight grains like pine and cottonwood. Hickory and Oaks also have straight grains and can be easily split. Generally, you can split a log more easily when it is green. Softwoods tend to split easier than hardwoods.

What wood species gives off the most heat?



You will get the best results and get more heat per wood volume when burning the highest density woods you can find. Dense firewood will produce the highest BTUs but all wood must be “seasoned” for best results. The best firewood will have excellent coaling properties. The coaling stage is very important for sustaining heat over time.

5 of the Best Performing Firewoods

- Hickory - 25 to 28 million BTUs per cord - density 37 to 58 lbs. per cu. ft.
- Oak - 24 to 28 million BTUs per cord - density 37 to 58 lbs. per cu. ft.
- Black Locust - 27 million BTUs per cord - density 43 lbs. per cu. ft.
- Beech - 24 to 27 million BTUs per cord - density 32 to 56 lbs. per cu. ft.
- White Ash - 24 million BTUs per cord - density 43 lbs. per cu. ft.

What type of wood should not be burned?



There is nothing wrong with burning the wood that you have access to as long as it is dry and seasoned. However, some types of firewood perform better than others. Hardwoods will offer a steady and longer burn where softwoods burn hot and fast. If you fill your wood burning appliance with softwoods you will have to fill again sooner than if you were to use hardwoods. You will also have to clean the flue more often if burning softwoods on a regular basis.

5 of the Poorest Performing Firewoods

- White Pine - 15 million BTUs per cord - density 22 to 31 lbs. per cu. ft.
- Cottonwood/Willow - 16 million BTUs per cord - density 24 to 37 lbs. per cu. ft.
- Basswood - 14 million BTUs per cord - density 20 to 37 lbs. per cu. ft.
- Aspen - 15 million BTUs per cord - density 26 lbs. per cu. ft.
- Yellow Poplar - 18 mm million BTUs per cord - density 22 to 31 lbs. per cu. ft.

What are a Face Cord and a Full Cord?



The two most common ways to measure firewood is by the "Full Cord" or "Face Cord". The difference between the two is that a full cord of firewood is an amount of wood that fills a space equal to 8 ft. long x 4 ft. high x 4 ft. deep. A standard length of firewood in a full cord is 16" long and most of the time a full cord of firewood will consist of three rows stacked four feet wide and eight feet long. A face cord of firewood is equal to a single stack of firewood that measures 4 ft. high x 8 ft. long by however deep the length of the firewood is. Log length in a face cord of

firewood varies and there is not a standard length.

What is the best way to store firewood?



The best way to store firewood is in a firewood [rack](#). It will keep the firewood off of the ground high enough that you do not have to worry about the wood rotting or insects infesting the wood. Having the firewood stacked neatly in a firewood rack allows the firewood to season properly as well. It is recommended that you cover the firewood with either a firewood rack cover or a tarp to keep it dry during the rain. Some covers are breathable and can be left on all of the time. If you are storing firewood that has been kiln dried then it can be stored indoors or in a shed. Indoor storage is not a good idea for green firewood because of the higher moisture content and it evaporating as the wood dries.

What is the best way to purchase firewood?



If you are not a wood burner that wants to go to the wood and cut your own firewood there are companies that you can order firewood through or independent sellers for smaller amounts. The best way to get the most bangs for your buck would be to order it in bulk. Standard, full, logger and pulp cords generally refer to a pile of 8' lengths that measure 4' high by 4' wide. This is a volume of 128 cu. ft. This year we purchased 20 loggers cords and spent \$1500. Each loggers cord equals about 3 face cord, so our 20 loggers cords translate to about 60 face cords. Locally the going rate for a face cord of firewood is about \$50 for mixed hardwood like we purchased. That means we saved about \$1500 purchasing our firewood this way. If we would have purchased firewood cut to length we potentially could have spent \$3000. That is an awesome savings but keep in mind it is a savings that you will have to work for.