

- **How to use Logs as Fuel**

Logs as firewood are a very versatile fuel. When obtained from sustainable sources they are the ultimate renewable fuel and can be burned in stoves, wood burners and fires, or in the new craze, in outdoor ovens. Logs can be burned to heat water, heat rooms or the whole house, to cook food indoors, or outdoors in chimeneas, barbeques or fire pits.

There are a number of benefits to using wood as fuel. Firstly, contrary to what many people think, burning wood or logs can be environmentally beneficial. Much of the woodland in the UK is semi-natural woodland and benefits from being managed. Secondly, providing the wood comes from a sustainable source, wood is a source of renewable energy. Using logs as a fuel also benefits the rural economy by providing local employment and an opportunity for diversification for farmers and other landowners.

- **How to buy and store Firewood Logs**

The best way to buy logs is by volume rather than by weight because between 35% and 60% of the weight of freshly felled wood comes from water. When freshly felled (known as green), Poplar is one of the wettest woods and Ash, at 35%, one of the driest. The ideal moisture content for firewood is less than 20%. Using a Moisture Meter will tell you the water content of your firewood.

Burning wet wood will produce steam as the fire tries to 'boil' the water, far less heat is produced as so much of it is being used to dry the wood, and problems with caking in the chimney and pollution through smoke.

Seasoning, by stacking and storing the logs, reduces the moisture content of the wood. Wood felled during one winter should be seasoned until the next before it is burned. Whilst seasoning, the logs should preferably be stored under cover in an airy place such as an open sided lean-to or purpose made Log Store.

Wood can be burned when the moisture content is below 30% - 'air-dry' or ideally below 20%. You can tell if a log is dry because the bark will come away easily in the hand and the log will have splits across the grain. Ideally, logs should be no more than 10cm thick and at a length suitable for the size of appliance that you are using to burn them. Having a small hatchet to hand by the Log Store is very useful to make any final splitting that may be necessary.

- **Which wood makes the best Firewood**

There are many types of wood available in the UK, and we have produced a handy guide to the types of tree and its suitability for firewood in our 'Wood Burning Guide'. Bear in mind that the heavier, denser woods have the highest calorific value and therefore will burn longer. Hardwoods like oak and beech tend to be denser than softwoods such as pine and spruce. However, some of the very dense hardwoods like oak and elm take a long time to season well and can be very difficult to burn, so it is usually best to burn them with another type of wood as well. Softwoods tend to be easy to light and to burn quickly which makes them very good for kindling. Some species like spruce and horse chestnut spit badly making them a hazard in an open fire. Some of the best woods to burn are ash, apple, beech and hawthorn.