

LOG STORAGE AND SEASONING WOOD

There are two very good reasons why wood should be properly stored in a log store. To begin with is supply, not everyone is a master lumberjack. Secondly, wood is a living thing and contains much natural water which can cause its own problems when burning. Although a laborious job, properly storing wood to dry in a log store will give the end result of an economic and industrious working fire.

During the burning of wood two main by-products are formed, Carbon Dioxide and water. Of the two it is the water that is avoidable, through the drying of wood properly within a log store. No fire burns wet wood properly and the result is a decrease in efficiency of your fire's output. The loss of energy is often given as the total heat needed to boil and burn the water out of the wood. A loading of wet wood may contain nearly a full bucket of water, which must be first boiled off from the wood before your fire can be 100% efficient. This energy and heat used to boil out all the water from the wet wood is easily seen as the amount of heat lost from your burning fire. A precise number for the loss in productivity of your wood is incalculable, it is however supremely noticeable.

Compared to wood, water is a far greater conductor of heat, and putting saturated logs on to your fire has the effect of instantly smothering the space and flame of the fire beneath. If you continue doing this, you end up with a fire that extinguishes itself under its own steam.

As the wood burns it wastes more and more heat. As the outer layer of the wood burns and falls away it will present a new layer which will need all of its water to be boiled and burned from the wood. Like an onion, these many layers must be burned through before the wood is finished.

This pervading dampness through the fire will also affect the ability for the air to pass through the wood and stopping a natural stoking of the fire.

All these things combine to dramatically reduce the levels of heat that your fire puts out.

Due to the saturated wood continually cooling the fire it will never reach its optimum temperature. This wasted energy will escape the fire as smoke, a visible proof that the fire is wasting energy. Keeping your wood well stocked within a log store will cut down on all these problems caused by sodden wood.

Similar to the forming of condensation from boiling water, burning a wet fire can cause an ensuing damp around the room. A reduced temperature in your flue will mean gasses escape far slower causing an already clogged airway to be further closed.

Regardless of what quantity and quality of wood you are burning it must be properly dried. Drying wood in your own log store will mean that you know your wood is burning at its most productive rate giving you the desired effect. An aesthetically pleasing log store especially designed to dry the wood to its maximum in as small amount of time as possible is an absolute must for any fire, stove, chiminea, log-burner or range.

- **Buying Firewood Logs**

No matter the circumstances of the fire, when burning firewood you should make sure that it is always dry firewood. As well as smoke pollution problems, damp logs can also cause a build up of flammable materials in your chimney or flue causing efficiency problems. Therefore the lower the moisture content of the wood, the better.

When ordering your wood it is a good idea then to check with your supplier on what the moisture content of the wood is. Unseasoned/green wood is usually cheaper but will need to be kept in a log store for up to a year, if not longer, before it is ready to be used.

An ideal percentage in terms of moisture content is less than 20% - ideally 10 to 12 %

As well as talking with your supplier, another way of being sure of the burn quality of your wood supply is through a Moisture Meter. This, through regular checks, will tell you the quality of your wood and its suitability for burning as well as the quality of wood that you are buying.

- **What wood should I burn?**

Although people hold many wide and varying opinions of what is the best wood to burn, in a general manner when all wood is seasoned in a log store, the end result is a successful fire. See our 'Guide to Wood Burning - what are the best logs to burn'.

However, hardwoods are always the best when it comes to burning. Softwoods can give off smells and excessive fumes, and do not always dry as well. Hardwood is the best for burning, and purchasing in larger quantities to fill your log store will mean saved money in the long run.

- **What Quantity of Firewood should I buy?**

A big problem with the purchasing of fire wood is quantity because no log is cut the same, as well as how damp the wood is, and the general varying size. Knowing how much wood you have actually ordered is difficult to quantify.

Stacked firewood is measured in volume and often in cubic metres. Wood in Great Britain however is often bought in a 'load'. Firewood is rarely if ever sold by weight; it is too varying and depends on too many differing factors. How much firewood you want to fill your log store is an important factor and something that should be determined before purchasing.

Buying a 'load of logs' is popular way of purchasing firewood. However, when any loose logs are stacked, they can often seem far less than you had originally thought. Working out cost is only available if you have an idea of the volume of wood being offered.

- **Builders or Bulk Bags of Logs**

An often used method of delivering firewood, it has the advantages of being both easy for the deliverer and the customer when it comes to unloading, as well as being a visual idea of how much wood you have ordered.

A builder's bag will not necessarily contain a ton as often described. The wood is loose within the bag, so you are not receiving the entire bag filled.

The best way to find a quality supplier is through word of mouth. Asking around will often highlight suppliers that you did not know where even there. Finding a good supplier of quality firewood and in the amounts you require is a must. You may also need an axe or hatchet for the breaking down of your wood to be more manageable, depending on the sizes that you are buying.

Finally and most importantly, upon discovering your supplier and ordering your firewood, make sure you invest in a quality, strongly built log store in which to keep them. Storing your wood merely outside or in a bag will result in damp wood and a waste of money. A properly ventilated log store in a convenient setting for you to use, will dry your logs and keep them well protected.

A Dorset Log store is perfect for this.