The burning properties of wood



0845 300 1818

The burning properties of woods referred to in this factsheet are for dry, seasoned wood. All woods burn better when seasoned and some burn better when split rather than as whole logs.

In wet weather if you have no dry kindling go to the nearest hedge. You can always find dry dead wood for starting a fire in the thickest part of the hedge, but take care not to damage the hedge itself.

* Woods marked with an asterisk are not likely to come to hand very often these days, but can be found particularly on old farms and long established forests.

Poor in heat and does not last.

Alder

Elder Mediocre. Very smoky quick burner

with not much heat.

Elm Unpredictable since Dutch elm

> disease. Can, but not always, smoke violently. One large log put on before bed will keep the fire in

for the morning.

Hawthorn Similar to blackthorn.

Hazel Good.

Holly Good only when seasoned.

Hornbeam Almost as good as beech.

Horse Chestnut Apple Splendid. It burns slowly and

Good flame and heating power but steadily with little flame but good heat. The scent is also pleasing.

spits a lot.

Larch Crackly, scented and fairly good for The best burning wood providing Ash

both flame and heat and if

necessary will burn when green.

Has a brilliant flame. Laurel Beech A rival to ash, though not as good

and only fair when green. Poor. Burns with a dull flame. Lime

Birch The heat is good but it burns Maple Good.

quickly. The smell is pleasant.

Oak It is sparse in flame and the smoke Blackthorn Quite one of the best woods. Burns is acrid. Very old dry seasoned oak

slowly, with good heat and little is excellent for heat, burning slowly smoke. and steadily and producing little

ash.

*Cedar Needs to be fully dried. Full of snap

and crackle. It gives little flame but Pear A good heat and a good scent. much heat and the scent is

beautiful. Pine Burns with a splendid flame, but is

apt to spit. The resinous

Burns slowly with good heat. Weymouth pine has a lovely scent

Another wood with the advantage of and a cheerful blue flame. a pleasant scent.

Douglas Fir Little flame or heat.

Cherry

*Plane Burns pleasantly but can throw

sparks if very dry.

Plum Good heat and scent.

Poplar Poor to fair.

*Rhododendron

The thick old stems, being very

tough, burn well.

*Robinia (Acacia)

Burns slowly with good heat but

with acrid smoke.

Spruce Burns too quickly and with too many

sparks.

Sycamore Burns with a good flame with

moderate heat.

*Walnut Good with a pleasant scent.

Willow Poor. Burns slowly with little flame

even when seasoned and is apt to

spark.

*Yew Last but one of the best. Burns

slowly with a fierce heat and the

scent is pleasant.

A rhyme to help you to remember

These hardwoods burn well and slowly, Ash, beech, hawthorn oak and holly. Softwoods flare up quick and fine, Birch, fir, hazel, larch and pine. Elm and willow you'll regret, Chestnut green and sycamore wet