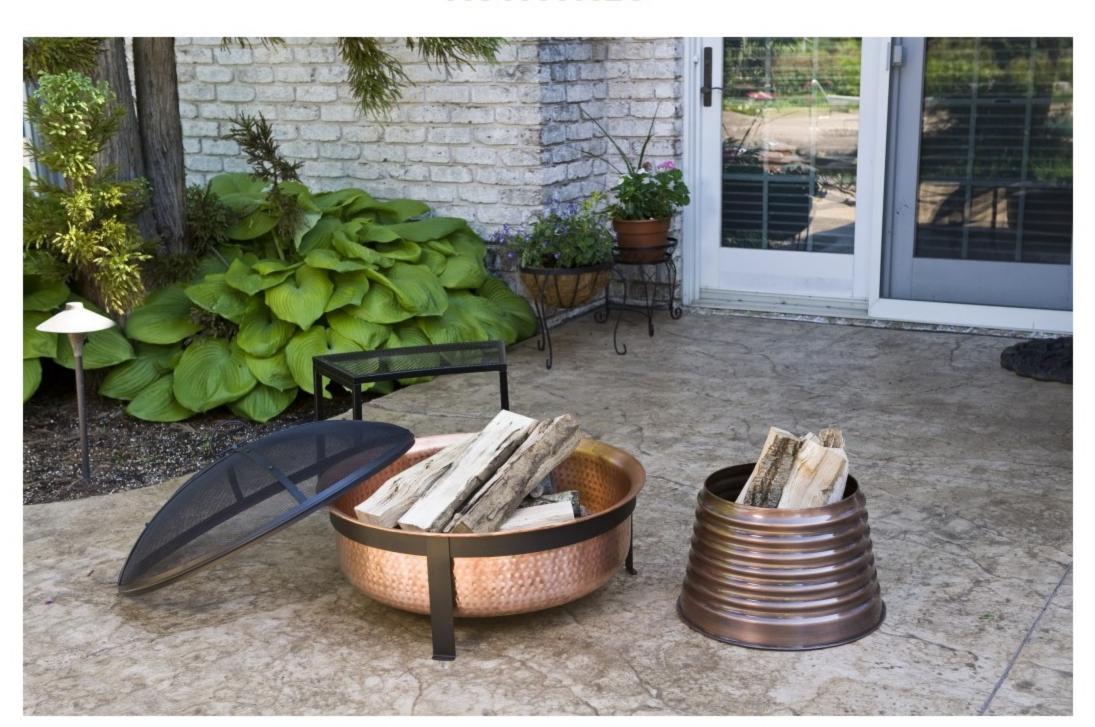


FLOWER GARDENING / VEGETABLE GARDENING / OUTDOOR LIVING / GARDEN FRESH RECIPES

FIRE PITS / AUGUST 22, 2016

CHOOSING THE BEST FIREWOOD FOR YOUR FIRE PIT **ACTIVITIES**



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hether you're cooking or just relaxing around the fire, there are many ways to utilize your fire pit. However, did you know that certain types of wood are better suited for each of these fire pit activities? Because of this, the best firewood for your fire pit depends greatly on what you want from the fire.

In this guide, we will breakdown some of the most popular types of wood for burning to help you decide which is best for your fire pit needs.

When to Use Softwoods

Softwoods are not typically the first choice for cooking because of the size of the flames and some of the scents they produce. There are some exceptions to this rule, such as cedar, which is great for smoking and cooking. In general, softwoods burn very quickly. While this is not suitable if you're looking for a long-term fuel, it's great for getting things started. Use softwoods for kindling, or if you want a relatively quick fire before heading inside for the evening.

These types of woods are also great if you want a fire with big, lively flames. Softwoods will create a bright, warm atmosphere if you're sitting around the fire pit in the evening with your family and friends. Popular softwoods for fire pit burning include pine, cedar, redwood, and fir.

When to Use Hardwoods

As a rule, very dense hardwoods are the best for cooking. These woods contain more wood fiber than firewood that is less dense, causing them to burn much slower. While they may take longer to ignite, hardwoods generate low flames that emit a steady, radiant heat.

Large flames, like those created by many types of softwood, are not ideal for cooking because they will often overcook the outside of your food long before the inside is done. Whereas, the glowing coals that hardwood fires create are excellent for cooking. In addition to desirable burning qualities, hardwoods also tend to produce great aromas and impart the best smoky flavors into your foods. Popular hardwoods for fire pit burning include oak, madrone, ash, hickory, and maple.

Now that you know which woods to use, it's time to try cooking a few classic recipes over your fire pit!

A Closer Look at Burning Properties

A Gloser Look at Burning Properties				
Wood	Туре	Burning Qualities	Best Uses	
Ash	Hardwood	Perhaps one of the best woods for burning, ash generates a steady flame and heat. It burns well in any state, but especially when dry.	Cooking (fish and meat); warmth	
Cedar	Softwood	Cedar burns very well for a long period and its small, steady flames radiate good heat. It may throw some sparks, but cedar gives off a lovely smell when burnt.	Cooking (pork and fish); warmth; ambience	
Cherry	Hardwood	Cherry wood can be very desirable firewood as long as it is properly seasoned. It burns low and slowly with great heat. It also has a beautiful, faintly fruity	Cooking (pork, poultry, red meat); warmth; ambience	
Fir	Softwood	Fir is relatively easy to burn even when unseasoned. While it does produce some smoke and sparks, fir smells great and has good heat output.	Warmth; ambience	
Hickory	Hardwood	Another wood at the top of the list for best firewood, hickory produces long-lasting heat and sweet scents. It is a favorite for cooking.	Cooking (ham, pork, beef); warmth	
Hawthorn	Hardwood	Hawthorn is an ideal choice for firewood because it burns very slowly and yields powerful heat.	Warmth; ambience	
Maple	Hardwood	Though it can take time to light, maple burns steadily without much smoke. It has a faintly sweet aroma that imparts a nice flavor on food.	Cooking (poultry, pork, and game birds); warmth	
Oak	Hardwood	When oak is seasoned for at least a year, this wood will burn slowly and steadily with small flames. This wood makes great coals and creates little smoke.	Cooking (pork, red meat, bold game); warmth	
Pine	Softwood	Pine is an easy-burning wood that produces a very pleasant scent. Trapped sap may cause this wood to crackle and spark as it burns.	Warmth; ambience	

Along with the many varieties of desirable firewood, there are also woods that are best avoided. Woods on this list may produce too much smoke or many sparks, burn poorly, or emanate

- unpleasant smells. Poplar - Best avoided because of its poor burn, poplar also produces a lot of smoke.
- Spruce This wood burns easily, but much too quickly. Spruce also sparks and smokes quite a bit, so it's not ideal for a fire pit.
- Laburnum Much like poplar, laburnum is a smokey, poorly burning wood.
- Willow Even when seasoned, willow can be very difficult to burn. Save yourself some frustration, and skip this wood. Chestnut - This wood is not a great choice if you want goo heat output. Chestnut does not
- Walnut Every type of walnut has the tendency to give off heavy smoke that has a strong, bitter scent. If you choose to use it, make sure to mix it with other woods.

No matter which type of firewood you choose, wood that has been seasoned will produce the best results in any situation.

What is Seasoned Wood?

burn well and creates very small flames.

Seasoned wood is firewood that has been dried over long periods, typically by the air, to reduce the moisture content for more efficient burning. The denser the wood, the longer it needs to be seasoned. Regardless of your fire pit activities, wood burns most effectively when it is dry.

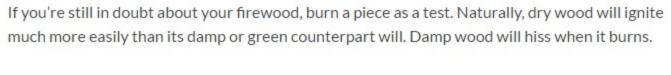
Wood that is unseasoned, also known as green wood, is much harder to light, emits more smoke, produces little heat, and often extinguishes quickly. When buying wood for burning, make sure to check for signs that it has been seasoned.

Keeping Your Wood Dry

If you purchase or collect wood for later use, be sure to store the wood where it will be fully shielded from the rain or snow so it stays dry. For large quantities of wood, store it in stacks outside of your home under a tarp or permanent structure such as a woodshed. For smaller quantities, store the wood indoors or outdoors in a designated holder or even a decorative container. If outside,

make sure the holder has a cover. Are you unsure if your firewood is dry enough? Here are a few tips to help you tell:

- Check for cracks in the grain at the ends of the wood. This may not always be 100% accurate, but it can sometimes be a quick identifier.
- 2. The wood sounds hollow and dry when knocked against another log. 3. The outside is faded or gray, while the inside is a crisp
- white color.
- 4. When split open, the inside of the wood should feel dry to the touch.

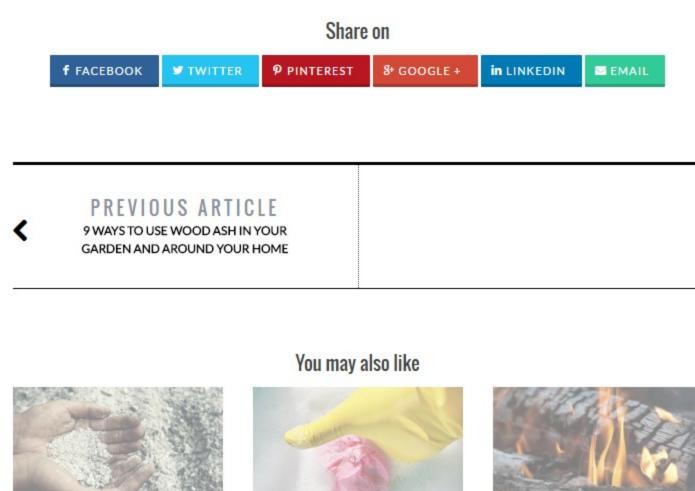


What's Your Favorite Firewood? Ultimately, the best firewood is the one that gives you the results you prefer, and trying many

different types of wood is the easiest way to find out what you like. Plus, you will have yet another excuse to use your fire pit! Do you have a favorite type of firewood or more questions about choosing the right variety? Let us

know in the comments below! We'd love to see pictures of your successful fire pit ventures on your next visit to our Facebook page.

Also be sure to sign up for our <u>e-newsletter</u> to receive updates about other informative articles as well as a 10-percent discount on all of our fire pits and other outdoor supplies.









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