

Species Burn Chart for Wood Heat

Tree Species	Burn Quality	Heat Output	Seasoning Time	Notes
Oak	Slow, steady burn	High	12+ months	Ideal for overnight burns; dense and long-lasting
Hickory	Hot, clean burn	Very High	12+ months	Excellent heat; can be hard to split
Maple (Hard)	Moderate burn	Medium-High	9–12 months	Reliable and widely available
Ash	Burns well green	Medium	6–9 months	Great for quick seasoning; low smoke
Cherry	Pleasant aroma	Medium	6–9 months	Good for indoor stoves; easy to split
Birch	Quick, hot burn	Medium	6–9 months	Burns fast; best mixed with denser woods
Pine	Fast, resinous burn	Low	6–12 months	Good for kindling; high creosote risk
Poplar	Quick, low heat	Low	6–9 months	Use in shoulder seasons or mix with hardwoods
Locust	Very dense, long burn	Very High	12+ months	Excellent heat; hard to split
Elm	Burns unevenly	Medium	12+ months	Difficult to split; better when well-seasoned

Note: Always season wood thoroughly and burn in a high-efficiency stove to reduce emissions and creosote buildup.



Seasonal Woodpile Checklist (Regenerative Edition)

Spring

- ☐ Assess winter wood usage and remaining stock
- ☐ Identify downed trees or limbs for harvest
- ☐ Begin splitting and stacking for next season
- ☐ Check stove and chimney for post-winter maintenance
- ☐ Start sourcing or prepping kindling (twigs, pine, etc.)

Summer

- ☐ Continue splitting and stacking in dry, airy location
- ☐ Cover top of stacks (leave sides open for airflow)
- ☐ Monitor seasoning progress—check moisture content if possible
- ☐ Rotate stacks if needed to prevent mold or rot
- ☐ Plan for ash use in compost or garden beds

Fall

- ☐ Move seasoned wood closer to the house
- ☐ Clean chimney and inspect stove seals
- ☐ Prep kindling and fire starters
- ☐ Set up indoor wood storage system
- ☐ Review emergency backup heat options

Winter

- ☐ Monitor burn efficiency and adjust airflow
 - ☐ Rotate wood use to maximize heat output
 - ☐ Keep pathways to woodpile clear of snow/ice
 - ☐ Track usage for next year's planning
 - ☐ Use wood ash sparingly in compost or garden (avoid overuse)
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Wood Heat Tips for Regenerative Practice

1. Prioritize Local Sourcing

Use wood from your own property, neighbors, or local tree services. Storm-downed trees, invasive species, and pruning waste are excellent sources. This reduces transport emissions and supports local resilience.

2. Season Wood Thoroughly

Split and stack wood at least 6–12 months before burning. Properly seasoned wood burns hotter, cleaner, and with less creosote buildup. Use a moisture meter if possible—ideal moisture content is below 20%.

3. Stack Smart for Airflow and Drying

Elevate stacks off the ground, cover the top (not the sides), and orient stacks to catch prevailing winds. Good airflow prevents mold and speeds seasoning.

4. Match Wood Species to Your Needs

Use dense hardwoods (oak, hickory, locust) for overnight burns and cold snaps. Use softwoods (pine, poplar) for kindling or mild weather. Mix species for balanced burn cycles.

5. Maintain Your Stove and Chimney

Clean chimneys regularly to prevent creosote fires. Check door seals and gaskets for efficiency. Use EPA-certified stoves for better combustion and lower emissions.

6. Use Ash Wisely

Wood ash is alkaline and mineral-rich. Use sparingly in compost piles or garden beds to balance pH and feed microbes. Avoid overuse, especially in already alkaline soils.

7. Practice Forest Stewardship

Consider coppicing, silvopasture, and selective thinning to maintain healthy woodlots. Avoid clear-cutting and leave habitat for wildlife.

8. Plan for Emergencies

Keep a backup stash of dry kindling and firewood near the house. Have alternative heat sources ready in case of stove failure or extreme weather.

9. Involve the Whole Family

Teach kids to stack, split, and tend fires safely. It builds confidence, connection, and respect for the labor behind warmth.

10. Track Your Usage

Keep notes on how much wood you burn each season, what species worked best, and how

long it took to season. This helps you plan smarter year after year.
