

Sweep's Library: Firewood Comparison Charts

Q: What's the best wood to burn?

A: Generally speaking, you'll get best results burning the highest density (heaviest) hardwood with the highest BTU (available heat) content that can be found in your area. Here are two charts, the first one organizing various species by BTU content (1 MBTU = one million btu), and the second organizing the same species alphabetically for easy lookup.

Chart A: Sorted by BTU Content

Wood Species	Lbs / Cord	MBTU/ Cord
Osage Orange (Hedge)	4,728	32.9
Hickory, Shagbark	4,327	27.7
Eastern Hornbeam	4,267	27.3
Beech, Blue	3,890	26.8
Birch, Black	3,890	26.8
Locust, Black	3,890	26.8
Hickory, Bitternut	3,832	26.7
Locust, Honey	3,832	26.7
Apple	4,140	26.5
Mulberry	3,712	25.8
Oak, White	4,012	25.7
Beech, High	3,757	24
Maple, Sugar	3,757	24
Oak, Red	3,757	24
Ash, White	3,689	23.6
Birch, Yellow	3,689	23.6
Elm, Red	3,112	21.6
Hackberry	3,247	20.8
Tamarack	3,247	20.8
Ash, Black	2,992	20.5
Birch, Gray	3,179	20.3
Birch, Paper	3,179	20.3
Birch, White	3,179	20.3
Walnut, Black	3,192	20.2
Cherry	3,120	20
Ash, Green	2,880	19.9
Cherry, Black	2,880	19.9
Elm, American	3,052	19.5
Elm, White (Russion, Siberian)	3,052	19.5
Sycamore	2,808	19.5
Maple, Red	2,924	18.7
Fir, Douglas	2,900	18.1
Boxelder	2,797	17.9
Alder, Red	2,710	17.2
Pine, Jack	2,669	17.1
Pine, Norway	2,669	17.1
Pine, Pitch	2,669	17.1
Catalpa	2,360	16.4
Hemlock	2,482	15.9
Spruce, Black	2,482	15.9
Pine, Ponderosa	2,380	15.2
Aspen	2,295	14.7
Butternut	2,100	14.5
Spruce	2,100	14.5
Willow	2,100	14.5
Fir, Balsam	2,236	14.3
Pine, White (Eastern, Western)	2,236	14.3
Fir, Concolor (White)	2,104	14.1
Basswood	2,108	13.8
Buckeye, Ohio	1,984	13.8
Cottonwood	2,108	13.5
Cedar, White	1,913	12.2

Chart B: Sorted Alphabetically

Wood Species	Lbs / Cord	MBTU / Cord
Alder, Red	2,710	17.2
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Weight and Heat content figures are based on seasoned wood at 20% moisture content, and 85 cu ft of wood per cord. A cord of wood is defined as a stack 4 feet high, 4 feet deep and 8 feet long, which comes to 128 cu ft, but we deduct for air space between the pieces in the stack. Regardless of what species of wood you burn, it won't produce optimal heat output and burn time unless it is properly seasoned.