

The burning properties of different types of wood

Not all wood burns the same... Some burn slow, others fast. Some burn only reluctantly and give off little heat. Some, like apple and cedar, smell very pleasant when burning while others give off an acrid smell. Beware of wood which crackles, spits or sends out sparks. And avoid all those which leave oily deposits on the inside of your chimney.

NB All wood should be thoroughly seasoned (dried out) over one or two years before burning. However, some types of wood do burn well without being dried, a useful attribute when you have run out of properly seasoned supplies...

Alder	Hopeless for burning wet. Once thoroughly dried it will burn ok.
Apple	An excellent wood. Burns slowly and steadily and produces good heat. It smells great, too!
Ash	The best – it burns steadily wet or dry, doesn't spit and the logs can be split easily.
Beech	Burns well if dried.
Birch	Produces a good heat but will burn away quickly so it is best to use it with slower-burning woods like oak.
Cedar	Should be fully dried, but it smells lovely and gives off a lot of heat. Doesn't spit too much.
Cherry	Another wood which needs to be well seasoned, but cherry smells lovely when burned.
Elm	Elm has a very high water content, so lengthy seasoning is essential. It gives off good heat and is slow to burn. You may need a faster-burning wood with it to keep it going.
Eucalyptus	Very sappy, so thorough seasoning is necessary. Once dried, eucalyptus burns well without spitting.
Hawthorn and Blackthorn	Excellent firewood, making good heat and little smoke. Hawthorn burns very prettily with a lilac-coloured flame.
Hazel	Another excellent firewood. Burns well and little or no

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	spitting.
Hornbeam	Good burning.
Horse Chestnut	Not a good choice: Horse Chestnut spits a lot.
Larch	Not recommended. Larch needs to be well seasoned, and it spits a lot and forms an oily soot in chimneys.
Lime	A low quality burning wood, with only a dull flame.
Oak	When old and seasoned oak burns very slowly giving off an excellent heat and producing very little ash.
Pear	Needs to be seasoned well, then burns well without spitting.
Pine	Burns with an excellent flame, but is not recommended because of spitting and the oily soot it deposits inside the chimney.
Plane	Usable, but can throw out sparks.
Poplar	A poor firewood.
Robinia (acacia)	Burns slowly and gives off good heat, but has an acrid smell.
Rowan	Burns well.
Spruce	A poor firewood, burning too fast.
Sycamore	A good firewood which burns well giving off a moderate heat.
Walnut	Not good.
Willow	The very high water content means willow will only burn well if thoroughly seasoned.
Yew	Burns slowly and produced a high heat.