



Best Home Fires Begin with Right Firewood

Safe, energy efficiency home heating fires begin with the right kind of firewood, University of Georgia experts say.

Wood whose moisture content has been reduced through drying, or seasoned wood, is best for home fires. To prepare for the winter months, split, stack and cover firewood.

Normally with Georgia temperatures, firewood can sufficiently air dry for 3-4 months. In this time period, moisture content will have dropped in the wood where it will burn without putting a lot of residue up in the chimney or the stovepipe.

When it comes to building a home fire, don't go out and cut live trees for wood. If you didn't prepare your wood for the winter, UGA experts recommend buying seasoned wood from a vendor.

Fresh cut wood, or green wood, can leave buildup on your chimney and flu. Green wood is going to have a high moisture content and that moisture is going to allow a lot of the extractants in wood to go up in smoke and form residue on flues, chimneys, and stovepipe. Over time a build-up of creoso could start a chimney or a flu fire.

Seasoned wood is particularly important for an efficient heat source as well as safety. Hardwoods like oak, hickory, hard maple and pecan give a higher heat value and last longer.

Pine can be good starter wood, but it burns too quickly to be an efficient heat source. UGA experts recommend using only seasoned pine and in moderation.

You shouldn't burn 100 percent pine, but a little pine won't hurt. Pine burns fast so its heat output is over a much shorter time and is not very efficient for heat.

Burning proper wood and using proper setting on the stove can also lessen the amount of build-up in a stove, lessening the chances of a house fire.

Source: David Moorhead, University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences