

Sources of firewood

By Dan Shechtman

Where does one find a predictable long term source of firewood?

Your own lot

If you have your own woodlot, or have access to one, you are in excellent shape. One cord per acre per year can be culled from deadfall alone without compromising the integrity of the lot. Bring in a forester and have him or her advise you and each year selective cutting may enhance the property and promote greater growth.

If you don't have access to a lot don't despair. Just get ready to be creative.

Check with tree surgeons

Pull out your yellow pages and start calling local tree surgeons. Find out what they do with the trees they take down. Many tree surgeons have to travel some distance and pay in order to dump their wood. You may be the best thing that has come their way since the chain saw.

Many tree surgeons are thrilled to be able to deposit their day's work in your lot. I receive close to 70 cords per year in this manner. They may call you to the cutting sight, direct you to a dump area or take the wood to you. Doesn't matter. You'll be way ahead of the game either way.

Unless you have to, don't commit to every tree that comes along. You don't want your precious space filled up with punkey wood, rotten hemlock, or trees so huge and knotty that they are unmanageable. Most tree surgeons will deal with you in a fair manner.

Ask local government

Another source of firewood is from your city, county, or township. Most areas have a sight where crews dump

wood from storm damage, projects, diseased trees, etc. Also check with your local power company. They are always clearing and maintaining lines. Much wood goes down in this process.

Logging companies

If you live near where logging occurs find out what happens to the tops. The timber skidder pulls out the trunk wood and the tops are left behind. See if you can get access to this superb source of firewood. Check out local saw mills. Mills often sell slabwood real cheap by the truckload. Slabwood burns faster than logs but what the heck. Burn what you can get.

Public land cutting

If you wish to fell as well as buck your own firewood check with your local forester. Oftentimes, parcels of publicly owned land and state and national forests are opened up to selective cutting. See what exists in your area.

Buying stumpage, or paying a wood lot owner to cut firewood, is another source. Cordwood can usually be had at a very low price but be careful to make sure both parties understand all the terms. How much wood, which trees, what is to be done with the slash (debris), and what condition must the lot be left in are all issues that need to be resolved on paper, before you cut. Δ

I always consider the settlement of America with reverence and wonder, as the opening of a grand scene and design in providence, for the illumination of the ignorant and the emancipation of the slavish part of mankind all over the earth.

John Adams