

Hardwood or Softwood?

Choosing your pellet fuel is a personal decision that's all about choosing the right fuel for you based on a variety of things. Your stove make and model, your budget, and the amount of maintenance you're willing to do will make the decision on which pellet will be best for your circumstance.

POINT A:

There's not one pellet that's right for every person.

Selecting pellet fuel is about personal preference, and a lot of times the current weather conditions outside. There may be noticeable characteristics from one stove model to the next on the cleanliness, ash content, and heat output burning the same pellet. With that said, it's important that a customer try a few bags of all species, types, and grades of wood pellets to determine the difference for themselves.

POINT B:

Softwood pellets burn hotter and cleaner than hardwood pellets.

Finding the perfect fuel is about striking a balance you're comfortable with between price and quality. Reports do prove that softwood pellets burn hotter and cleaner than hardwood pellets. In pellet form, the density between a hardwood and softwood pellet is very similar. Wood species that have high resin/pitch values and low moisture values will provide you with the best heat output and lowest ash content. Pellets rely on the resin in the wood to bond together; the higher the resin value the stronger the pellet is. Softwoods have higher pitch values and typically we see softwoods dried to lower moisture values than hardwoods providing more heat and less ash during the burn process. Many people burn a hardwood pellet in spring and fall and a softwood pellet during the coldest months of the year. We always offer a nice assortment of both hardwood and softwood pellet brands for our customers throughout all months of the year.

POINT C:

All wood pellet fuel is not created equal.

There are many different wood species within the hardwood and softwood family. Each species will have different burn characteristics; in some cases very drastic differences. Today there are a handful of pellet manufacturers utilizing B and C grade timber (formally used in the paper industry) for making wood pellets. The process involves chipping, grinding, and pulverizing the material into sawdust. This is a great idea, however the consumer need be wary. Because they use whole logs, the ability to remove the BARK is critical. Bark is not only high in ash, it also carries dirt and sand in it as it grows. With bark in the pellet you'll see lots of ash, along with significant residue and heavier clinker formations in the firepot. In our testing we have received a truckload of pellets that burned great, only to find subsequent loads from the same supplier that were far from desirable. Most new mills in Wisconsin and Minnesota are utilizing this method. Unfortunately, these new manufacturers in many cases have been inconsistent in pellet processing. We only work with pellet mills that guarantee a consistent source of clean raw material and a quality manufacturing process certified by the Pellet Fuels Institute (PFI). Earth Sense regularly performs independent laboratory testing (over 50 times per year) on all of our pellet products to ensure our customers consistent, quality pellet fuel. You can be confident that you're getting the best quality pellet fuel through Earth Sense every time with our SATISFACTION GUARANTEE!



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