

# Wood

**By: Inspector Weeks      613.290.3697**

**Peter, I am looking into purchasing fire wood for the upcoming winter season. A few years back, the wood I purchased was either too young or too old but it never burnt right. I have been leery of purchasing again, but my current home has a great fireplace and I would like to use it this year. What questions do I ask the suppliers to make sure that I get good quality firewood? Susan Joyce, Chelsea, Quebec.**

**Purchasing firewood can be a little daunting and you would hope that most local suppliers would be able to provide good quality firewood. The first and most important question to ask is the type of wood. Good quality hardwoods such as maple and oak are your best bet. Other wood such as birch, ash and butternut are also good. The key thing that I have found is to establish when the wood was harvested and how long it has been cut, split and stacked. The ideal time; in my opinion, is wood that is cut in the last fall, split and stacked throughout last winter and delivered this fall. Time wise, it takes about twelve to eighteen months from standing tree to your fireplace. This will give you optimum heat ( btu's ) from your firewood. Things to look for in the actual wood itself is a split end grain. This means drying cracks that are visible at the ends of the cut and split firewood log. These cracks provide evidence that the wood has been properly cured and are ready for burning. Wood that is too young ( green ) won't have these cracks, or may at best just be developing cracks in the end grain from the center out, and may still be a bit moist. Sometimes looks can be deceiving, but when you put a green log in the fireplace, it will tend to smolder and bubbles will appear at the end of the logs. Basically, you are burning off the unwanted moisture at this point and it will not burn as hot. Wood that is too old will tend to be light in weight and show signs of mold and mushrooms growing on it. This wood also tends to have a darkened end grain and has virtually no btu's in it. Now all you need to know is that a face cord should be four feet high by eight feet long. When it is delivered to you in a pile it is often difficult to tell exactly how much you have received, but at this point you have to have faith in mankind and that your supplies has in fact delivered you a cord of wood. Once it**

is stacked, you will know for sure. I hope this helps and remember to have your chimney cleaned before the burning season starts.



Old Wood



Green Wood



Ready to Burn

I welcome your questions please forward them to , Inspector Weeks ,c/o Peter Weeks Home Inspections [PWHI@sympatico.ca](mailto:PWHI@sympatico.ca) now changed to [pwhi.rhi@gmail.com](mailto:pwhi.rhi@gmail.com) or by phone at 613.290.3697.

Peter Weeks has been a Chelsea resident for 19 years. As a general contractor since 1988, he has been doing Residential Home Inspections for about four years. He is an Associate Member of OAH (Ontario Association of Home Inspectors), CAHPI (Canadian Association of Home & Property Inspectors) and a member of the BBB in Good Standing.

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