

# HEARTH PRODUCT FUELS

*The radiant heat and dancing flames of a fire in a fireplace or a freestanding stove can create a peaceful and relaxing gathering place within a home. To help people achieve this ambiance and warmth, there is now a wide variety of hearth products designed to suit almost any lifestyle and home design. But, one of the most exciting components of hearth products is the variety of fuel options that make the installation of stoves, fireplaces, fireplace inserts, masonry heaters and log sets possible in almost any home in North America.*

## Choosing the Right Fuel

Selecting a hearth product fuel depends on many factors: the cost and availability of the fuel; desired efficiency and heat output; maintenance requirements; and the expected appearance of the fire. Another factor is local air quality regulations that determine what types of hearth products can be installed within a particular area.

## Available Hearth Product Fuels

### ► WOOD

This renewable, non-fossil fuel is abundant throughout North America and is available by cord (128 cubic feet) or by face cord (66 cubic feet) through independent firewood dealers. People can also cut their own firewood on their personal property or through local forest management programs. There are two types of firewood: hardwoods and softwoods. But, no matter what type is selected, it is critical that all firewood be dried for at least six months before use (“seasoned” firewood).

- **Wood Burning Hearth Products:** Fireplaces, Freestanding Stoves, Fireplace Inserts and Masonry Heaters
- **Benefits of Burning Wood:** Low-cost heat; provides independence from utilities when power goes out; produces minimal smoke with use of EPA-certified or Clean Burning hearth products; ambiance of real wood fire; readily available fuel; renewable fuel that helps reduce threat of global warming; security.

### ► GAS

Natural gas and propane (otherwise known as LP or “liquefied petroleum gas”) are the two

types of gas used in hearth products, and are fossil fuels. Many cities throughout North America have natural gas utility companies that deliver the fuel underground to homes. Propane gas is generally delivered by private suppliers and is stored above ground in a cylindrical container on a person’s property near the home. Propane is used most often in rural areas where piped natural gas is not available.

- **Gas Hearth Products:** Fireplaces, Freestanding Stoves, Fireplace Inserts, Gas Log Sets
- **Benefits of Burning Gas:** No visible emissions; convenient and instantaneous fire; enjoyable and penetrating radiant heat; thermostatically-controlled heat; installation flexibility; realistic “wood-like” flames.

### ► PELLETS

Pellets are a renewable, non-fossil fuel made from 100 percent compressed sawdust. This fuel was developed in the 1970s as a way to use the waste wood from manufacturing processes. Pellets are an extremely efficient way to burn wood and can be purchased in 40-pound bags from specialty retailer locations or at some grocery and home stores. A unique advantage of pellet fuel is the ability to lock in fuel costs at the beginning of the heating season.

- **Pellet Hearth Products:** Freestanding Stoves, Fireplace Inserts
- **Benefits of Burning Pellets:** Low-cost heat; lock-in annual fuel costs early in the season; lowest level of wood burning emissions; automated wood fire; ease-of-use; installation flexibility.

See reverse side →

## ► COAL

Coal is a fossil fuel like natural gas and propane. Anthracite is the most commonly used coal fuel for home heating because of its high heating value. Coal provides an even, controllable heat and can sometimes be burned in a wood stove if the manufacturer designed it to be a dual fuel stove. Washed, bagged coal is a regionally available fuel.

- **Coal Hearth Products:** Freestanding Stoves, Fireplace Inserts
- **Benefits of Burning Coal:** Even, controllable heat; low-cost fuel; low emissions.

## ► MANUFACTURED FIRELOGS

Much like wood pellets, manufactured firelogs are made from waste sawdust and are designed to be low emissions alternatives to burning firewood in fireplaces and wood stoves. There are two types of manufactured firelogs: sawdust and wax/sawdust blend. Both products are available for use in Traditional and Clean Burning fireplaces, but only sawdust firelogs are recommended for use in EPA-certified wood stoves and fireplaces.

- **Manufactured Firelog Hearth Products:** Fireplaces, Freestanding Stoves (sawdust only)
- **Benefits of Burning Manufactured Firelogs:** Convenience; ease-of-use; reduced emissions; reduced creosote production; low cost.

## ► OIL

Oil has long been a popular choice for central home heating and is now becoming an option for hearth products. Oil burning hearth products offer a powerful heat for about the same cost per hour as natural gas. An oil burning hearth product runs quietly and can operate without electricity.

- **Oil Hearth Products:** Freestanding Stoves
- **Benefits of Burning Oil:** Cost-effective; use of existing fuel source.

## ► ELECTRICITY

A new category in hearth product fuels, electricity has shifted from being a supplemental fuel to use as a primary fuel for fireplaces. Electric fireplaces are an attractive option for condos, apartments, hotel lobbies, offices and other locations where there is an interest in fire with, or without, heat.

- **Electric Hearth Products:** Fireplaces, Freestanding Stoves
- **Benefit of Electricity:** Ambiance; optional heat; absolutely no emissions; installation flexibility.

## ► CORN

Corn is the newest hearth product fuel on the market and is a good example of an alternative, non-fossil fuel using available resources. Corn is either burned in a stove specifically designed to burn the fuel, or is burned in approved models of pellet stoves mixed with wood pellets.

- **Corn Hearth Products:** Freestanding Stoves
- **Benefits of Burning Corn:** Low cost; low emissions; convenience where fuel is available.

## Making the Final Decision

Before selecting a hearth product, you will need to choose a fuel type. For educated assistance in making that final decision, visit a specialty retailer in your area for expert advice. A specialty retailer is trained to assist you in this selection process. For a list of specialty retailers, visit [www.hpba.org](http://www.hpba.org).

### HEARTH PRODUCT FUEL COST COMPARISON

FUEL	PRICE
<b>Firewood</b> Oak 26,000,000 Btus per Cord* Pine 16,000,000 Btus per Cord	\$90-\$350 per Cord \$5.77-\$13.46 Cost per M/Btus**
<b>Natural Gas</b> 100,000 Btus per Therm	\$.60-\$2.25 per Therm \$5.00-\$22.50 Cost per M/Btus
<b>Propane</b> 93,000 Btus per Gallon	\$1.00-\$3.25 per Gallon \$10.80-\$34.95 Cost per M/Btus
<b>Pellets</b> 18,000 Btus per Ton	\$150-\$250 per Ton \$8.33-\$13.89 Cost per M/Btus
<b>Fuel Oil</b> 140,000 Btus per Gallon	\$.75-\$2.75 per Gallon \$5.35-\$19.64 Cost per M/Btus
<b>Electricity</b> 3,412 Btus per KWH	\$.08-\$.26 per KWH \$23.45-75.68 Cost per M/Btus

\*Btu = British Thermal Units  
\*\*M/Btus = Million British Thermal Units

This information brought to you by this specialty retailer: