

Firewood Characteristics for Northern NY

(Compiled from several sources) – Luoma 05-2006



Species (Million BTUs per dry cord)	Relative Amount of Heat	Ease of Starting	Ease of Splitting	Smoke Production	Spark Production	Overall Rating
Red oak (21.7) White oak (19.2) Hard maple (21.8)	High	Easy	Easy	Low	Few	Excellent
Ash (20.0)	Medium	Medium	Easy	Low	Few	Excellent
Hickory (25.4)	High	Fair	Medium	Low	Medium	Excellent
Black Locust	High	Hard	Difficult	Low	Few	Excellent
Soft maple (19.1) Black cherry (18.5)	Medium	Hard	Easy to Medium	Low	Few	Excellent
Beech (21.8)	High	Hard	Difficult	Low	Few	Excellent
Apple	High	Hard	Difficult	Low	Few	Excellent
Hophornbeam – aka. Ironwood (24.7)	High	Hard	Difficult	Medium	Medium	Excellent
Yellow Birch (21.3)	High	Easy	Medium	Low	Medium	Good
Paper Birch (18.2) Gray birch (17.5)	Medium	Easy	Medium	Low	Medium	Good
Elm (17.7)	Medium	Medium	Difficult	Medium	Very few	Good
Walnut	Medium	Fair	Medium	Low	Few	Good
Tamarack – aka. Larch	Medium	Easy	Easy	Medium	Medium	Good
Cottonwood – aka. Poplar (14.1)	Medium to Low	Easy	Easy	Medium	Medium	Good
Basswood (12.6)	Low	Easy	Easy	Medium	Few	Fair
White pine (13.3) and other pine	Medium	Very easy	Easy	Medium	Many to Medium	Fair to Poor
Hemlock (15.0)	Low	Easy	Easy	Medium	Many	Poor
Spruce (15.0) Balsam Fir (13.5)	Low	Easy	Medium to Easy	Medium to High	Many	Poor
Cedar	Low	Very easy	Easy	High	Many	Poor
Willow (13.5)	Low	Fair	Medium	Low	Medium	Poor

- Hardwoods generally are harder to ignite, burn cooler and slower, and produce more coals.
 - Softwoods generally ignite easy and burn fast and hot, and tend to throw sparks.
 - The 'Overall Rating' applies to indoor use after the fire is going.
 - Often, a mixture of wood species makes the best fire.
 - Dense wood (heavy when dry) = High heat value.
 - Get your firewood as dry as possible.