

More Than Meets the Eye

The hidden value of dead wood



People living near or traveling to our National Forests often see many dead trees, both standing and fallen, and ask “Why can’t these trees be cut and used for firewood? After all, they’re already dead; isn’t it wasteful to not use them?” This is a good question!

There are many important ecological functions of dead trees and good reasons why firewood cutting must be carefully regulated. Let’s look at some of these reasons...

DEAD TREES HELP CONTROL EROSION

By acting as a physical barrier to the flow of surface water, logs and other woody debris help to prevent soil from being washed away. This not only keeps the soil intact, but also prevents water-soluble nutrients from being removed.

DEAD TREES PROVIDE HOMES FOR WILDLIFE

One of the major responsibilities of the Forest Service is to maintain habitat for wild animals. Standing dead trees (snags) provide places to nest, rest, perch, roost, store food, escape predators and seek shelter from unfavorable weather for a host of birds and small mammals.

Many insects also live in snags, and are an important food source for birds. These birds help control insects that could otherwise destroy living forest trees. Birds of prey, such as hawks and owls, use snags as hunting perches, as they search for and eat destructive rodent species.

DEAD TREES PROVIDE SHADE

Dead, standing trees can provide a certain amount of shading for a site which has been opened up by fire, logging or insect kill. This shading can reduce evaporation enough to make the difference between a quick return to forested conditions and a long, slow process of regeneration.

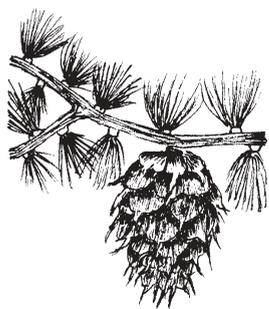
While standing dead trees help keep water on the site, fallen dead trees retain water much better. They reduce evaporation and hold water like a sponge. The longer a tree lies on the ground, the more porous and water-holding it becomes. This combination of shade and moisture often creates the perfect site for new seedlings.

DEAD TREES PROVIDE NUTRIENT RESERVOIRS

Nutrients such as nitrogen and calcium accumulate and are stored in decaying, fallen trees. These nutrients are eventually released into the soil and used by young trees and other plants. Without downed trees, much of these nutrient stores would be washed away and lost from the site.

Rotting wood harbors microorganisms such as fungi, which are critical to the movement of nutrients into plants. As a dead tree deteriorates, it begins to crumble and fall apart. The soft, moist, nutrient-rich fragments offer new seedlings an excellent rooting medium and new trees will find homes in the decomposing litter of old logs.

Dead trees play many important roles in maintaining forest ecosystems. Of course, the removal of some dead wood for firewood is acceptable, and in some areas, even beneficial. As long as removal is carefully managed, the forest will continue to provide firewood and other resources, now and in the future.



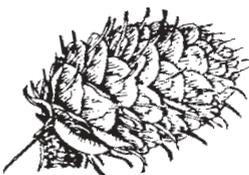
Western Larch - Tamarack

Dead or Alive? Can you tell the difference?

The western larch, also known as the tamarack, is a truly unusual, fascinating and important tree. It's uniqueness, however, is a threat to its life. Because its needles turn yellow and later fall to the ground, the larch appears to be dead during the winter even though it is very much alive.

When gathering firewood, please don't mistake a living larch for a dead one. There is more than one way to identify a western larch. Each season of the year presents the larch in a different dress. Fall, winter, spring or summer, the larch is easily recognized. In the fall, the needles of the western larch turn a straw yellow, contrasting sharply with the surrounding green of other trees. The needles soon drop to the ground, leaving the larch bare of foliage throughout the winter and early spring, taking on the appearance of a dead tree. Like the pines, larch needles are clustered. However, there are 14 or more needles in each cluster – far more than any pine has. The larch is the only cone-bearing tree in the Western United States that sheds all of its needles. This unusual characteristic makes identification absolutely certain.

To tell the difference between a western larch and a dead tree of another species in the wintertime (both without needles) examine the Twigs. The needles of the larch grow from conspicuous short spurs. These spurs, like rows of tiny barrels, easily identify larch in winter.



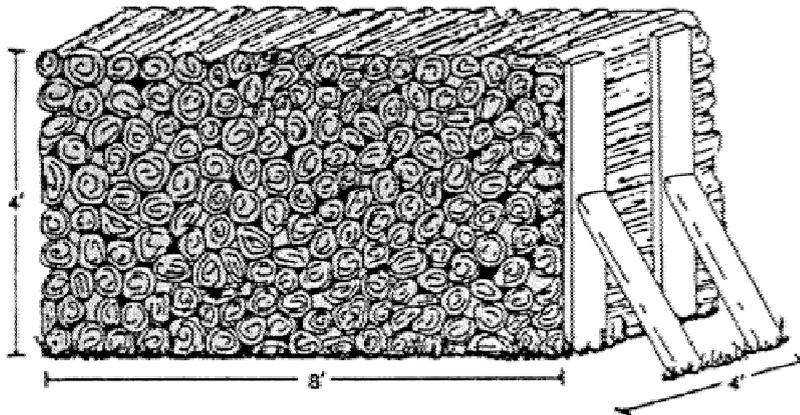
Identification of larch in the summer is not difficult. While its curious traits are less pronounced, the trees can be pinpointed with careful observation. Larch cones are “whiskery” and have single-pointed bracts that stick out like snake tongues. Its narrow crown has an open appearance and the entire trunk and all of the short, horizontal limbs can be seen.



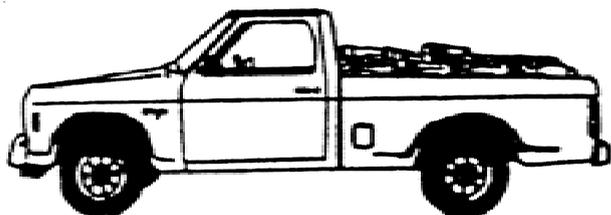
The Western Larch is a truly unusual fascinating and important tree. **Please be careful you don't cut a living one.**

Firewood Measurements

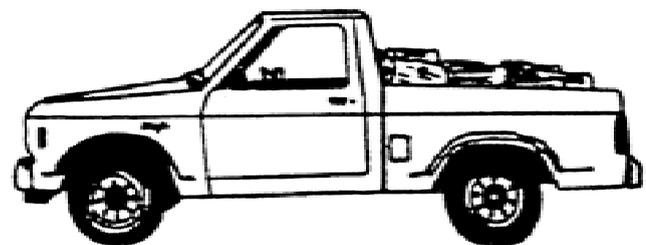
It is important to measure your firewood load correctly to make sure you validate the right number of load tickets. Each pickup bed is different and can haul* anywhere from 1/2 cord to 1-1/2 cords. For accuracy, use the following to calculate the amount of firewood loaded on your pickup: LENGTH x WIDTH x HEIGHT divided by 128 cubic feet.



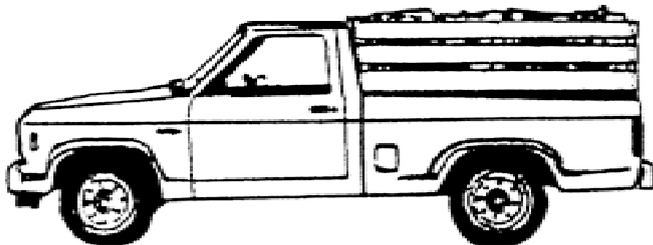
One cord of wood measures 8 feet long, 4 feet high and 4 feet wide. A cord contains 128 cubic feet of round wood.



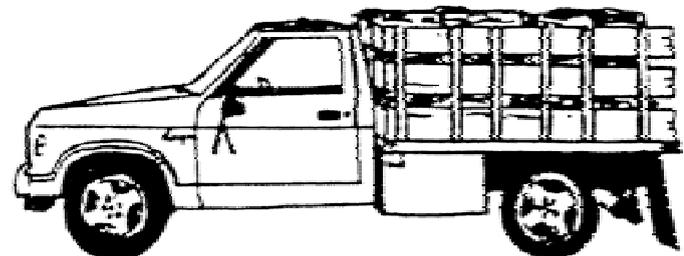
Small Pickup- 1/4 Ton
With or without racks, this truck bed holds approximately 1/2 cord of firewood.



Shortbed Pickup - 1/2 Ton
With or without racks, this truck bed holds approximately 3/4 cord of firewood.



Longbed Pickup - 1/2 or 3/4 Ton
Without racks, this truck bed holds approximately 3/4 cord of firewood. With racks, it holds approximately 1 - 1.5 cords of firewood.



Standard Truck - 1 Ton
With racks, this truckbed holds approximately 1.5 - 2 cords of firewood.

***Do not overload your truck with firewood. Check the owner's manual for your vehicle's safe weight restriction.**

Safety Reminders

Prevent Accidents!

- Know your physical condition and capabilities.
- Keep your equipment clean and in good condition.
- Stay alert! If you're getting tired, take a break.

Prevent Injuries!

Wear protective equipment such as:

- A hard hat to protect your head from falling limbs or branches.
- Safety glasses to protect your eyesight.
- Ear plugs to protect your ears from permanent hearing loss.
- Lightweight gloves to protect hands from abrasions and cuts.
- Heavy workboots or shoes with high tops and steel toes.
- Woodcutter chaps for leg protection.

Prevent Giardia!

Pack enough water to supply you for the day. Do not drink untreated water from streams, lakes, ponds or livestock watering facilities.

Prevent Hypothermia! Bring a variety of clothing. Temperatures can drop quickly in the late afternoon. Make sure your clothing is form fitting and free of ragged edges that could get caught in the chainsaw or snagged on brush or limbs.

And Always!

Let someone know where you're going and when you'll be home.

**REMEMBER!
ONLY YOU...**

Whaddya Say To A Guy Who's
Had The Same Job
For Over 60 Years,
Has Never Called In Sick
Or Showed Up Late,
Never Taken A
Vacation Or A Holiday,
Never Asked For A Raise
Or Griped About His Bonus
And, Believe It Or Not,
Has No Plans For Retirement?



THANKS!

Woodsmoke Hangs Around

In the northwest, many communities have what is known as an "inversion problem." On cold nights with little wind, layers of warm air act as a lid over the cold air in the valleys, trapping smoke and other pollution close to the ground. These stagnant conditions can last for days.

At times, smoke from residential woodburning combines with car exhaust, road dust and industrial emissions to cause air quality to become unhealthy. Smoke from just one poorly burning woodstove can cause serious health problems for our neighbors.

Woodsmoke contains fine particles that are so small the body's natural defense mechanisms can't keep them from penetrating deep in the lungs. These fine particles can damage lung tissue and lead to serious respiratory problems.

Fine particles are made up of wood, tar, gasses, soot and ash. Smoke also contains carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons. Every stove is capable of producing pollution and many stoves burning on a cold night when the air is stagnant can create a big pollution problem.

If your stove is sending up a lot of smoke signals, take notice, it means your fire is producing air pollution and you could be wasting time and money because you'll need to burn more wood. Following the half hour after lighting and refueling, a properly burning fire should give off only a wisp of white steam. Remember - the darker the smoke, the more pollutants it contains and the more fuel is being wasted.



BURN SMART To Improve Air Quality

The relationship between firewood and the ecosystem doesn't end at the forest boundary. The increasing use of wood heat over the last decade has contributed to our community's air pollution problem.

Woodsmoke isn't the only source of air pollution, but when too many homes fire up on stagnant air days, large amounts of smoke particles and toxic fumes become suspended in the air outside and even inside our homes. That's when woodsmoke can cause health problems. Some particles are so small they get inhaled deep into the lungs and can't escape. Young children, the elderly, and people with breathing difficulties are especially at risk. Woodsmoke also lowers your resistance to infections like pneumonia and aggravates bronchitis and asthma.

Most wood burning units emit more pollution into the air than alternate forms of heat such as natural gas, electricity, or oil, especially if they're not used properly. To get the most economically and ecologically from your wood heat, follow these wood-wise tips:

✓ *BURN RIGHT*

Use the proper stove for your home.
Maintain and clean your stove each year.

✓ *BURN SMART*

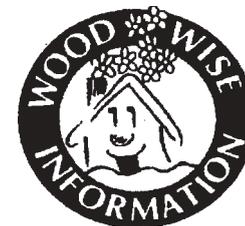
Burn small hot fires. A hot fire will get the most mileage from your wood by burning it completely and cleanly.

✓ *BURN CLEAN*

Use the proper fuel. Burning dry, seasoned wood reduces smoke emission and creosote buildup. Allow six to twelve months drying time and store your wood under cover.

✓ *BURN HOT*

Provide enough air to your fire. Avoid the temptation to "hold" a fire over night by cutting down the air supply. This creates more smoke and creosote buildup.



OPEN ROADS AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT

The official title of the program is "Forest Access and Travel Management." In layman terms, that translates to "ROAD and AREA CLOSURES." The Umatilla National Forest's 10-year Forest Land and Resource Management Plan calls for fewer open roads and restrictions on motorized vehicles on some existing roads. To comply, the Umatilla implemented Access Management Plans throughout the Forest.

In some cases, roads are seasonally closed to provide adequate habitat security for big game animals. Other resources also benefit from seasonal closures. For example, soil erosion and water quality problems are reduced, recreation experiences are more diverse, and opportunities for hiking and horseback riding are improved. Main roads such as those accessing private property, trailheads, campgrounds, developed springs, and scenic overlooks will remain open.

How does this affect the woodcutting program? Firewood cutting is now limited to areas accessible by the open road system. **Open roads** are Forest roads that are not permanently or seasonally closed with gates, barricades or road closure signs. Woodcutting will be allowed in those seasonally closed areas during the open periods. In addition, some woodcutting areas will open and close at varying times during the year rather than staying open for extended periods.

As firewood continues to be a major economic and recreational need in Eastern Washington and Oregon, the Firewood Program on the Umatilla National Forest will continue to be managed to provide the best possible areas and accessibility to woodcutters.

Access and Travel Management Maps, showing the current open road system for each District, are available, free of charge, at any Umatilla National Forest Office.

CONVENIENT LOCATIONS TO OBTAIN A FIREWOOD PERMIT

Because most Forest Service Offices are open Mon.-Fri., 7:45 AM to 4:30 PM, we've arranged for local businesses to sell our permits*. Most of these businesses are open early mornings, late evenings, and weekends. Some are open 24-hours a day. To better assist you, permits can be purchased at these following businesses:

Ace Hardware
1845 N. 1st
Hermiston, Oregon 97838
(541) 567-6816

Dale Store
Hwy 395
Dale, OR 97880
(541) 421-3484

Conoco General Store
426 W. Main Street
Dayton, WA 99328
(509) 382-1042

Farmers Exchange
215 W. Canal Dr.
Kennewick, WA 99336
(509) 586-3101

Dean's Market
412 SW 20th Street
Pendleton, OR 97801
(541) 278-1415

Heppner Chevron
329 N. Main Street
Heppner, OR 97836
(541) 676-5062

Elgin Chevron
785 Albany
Elgin, OR. 97827
(541) 437-3777

The Sportster
412 N Main
Milton-Freewater, OR 97862
(541) 938-3607

Mentzer & Elliott
4th & Elm
Pilot Rock, OR 97868
(541) 443-2351

Lazy Wolf Resort
Spray, OR
(541) 468-2001

Schurman's Hardware
801 6th Street
Clarkston, WA 99403
(509) 758-6411

Tollgate Gas & Store
62393, State Hwy 204
Weston, OR 97886
(541) 566-3661

Rhode's Supply
Hwy 244
Ukiah, OR 97880
(541) 427-3271

Pomeroy Foods
509 Columbia Street
Pomeroy, WA 99347
(509) 843-3391

Columbia Grain and Feed
2001 W. Lewis
Pasco, WA 99301
(509) 547-8818

***IMPORTANT:** This year, most vendors will only be able to sell four-cord permits. If you normally cut 5, 6, 7 or 10 cords, you will need to obtain your permits at a Umatilla National Forest Office during the hours listed above.

Granny's Store
Hwy 244
Ukiah, OR 97880
(541) 427-3449

Last Resort
Tucannon Road
Pomeroy, WA 99347
(509) 843-1556



Is the weather hot and dry?
Find out if there are
firewood cutting
restrictions!

CALL
1-877-958-9663
(24-hour message phone)

REQUIRED WOODCUTTING EQUIPMENT

- * SHOVEL
- * FIRE EXTINGUISHER
- * SPARK ARRESTOR



UMATILLA National Forest Where to Call:

**North Fork John Day
Ranger District**
Hwy 244
Ukiah, OR 97880
(541) 427-3231

Heppner Ranger District
117 South Main Street
Heppner, OR 97836
(541) 676-9187

Pomeroy Ranger District
71 West Main Street
Pomeroy, WA 99347
(509) 843-1891

**Walla Walla
Ranger District**
1415 W. Rose Street
Walla Walla, WA 99362
(509) 522-6290

Supervisor's Office
2517 SW Hailey Ave.
Pendleton, OR 97801
(541) 278-3716

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