**This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at [www.ksre.k-state.edu/news/stories/2021/12/horticulture-firewood-heat-values.html](http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/news/stories/2021/12/horticulture-firewood-heat-values.html)**

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**Buying firewood? Knowing heat values could aid your choice**

K-State horticulture expert gives tips for choosing wood

MANHATTAN, Kan. – Not all firewood is created equal.

That’s the word from Kansas State University horticulture expert Ward Upham, who said the wood from some tree species produces more heat than others.

High on the list are red, bur and post oak species, which produce a heat value of 25 (measured in millions of British Thermal Units, or BTUs). In a list of many common types of firewood, Upham said only Osage Orange (32.6), honeylocust (25.6) and black locust (28.3) rate higher than the oaks.

But, he adds, Osage Orange is not always the best choice due to its tendency to spark – “do not use in an open fireplace,” he said – and black locust can be difficult to split.

Many elm varieties and hackberry rate high (all around 20) but elm can be difficult to split, as well.

Upham said the Kansas Forest Service publication, *Managing Your Woodland for Firewood*, is a helpful resource for landowners interested in growing and harvesting firewood. The publication is available online.

For homeowners, Upham advises buying firewood locally to prevent spread of pests such as the Emerald Ash Borer, an exotic beetle that has devastated tens of millions of ash trees in 30 states, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

“Emerald Ash Borer has spread in Kansas primarily because of firewood,” he said.

Upham and his colleagues in K-State’s Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a weekly Horticulture Newsletter with tips for maintaining home landscapes. The newsletter is available to view online or can be delivered by email each week.
Interested persons can also send their garden- and yard-related questions to Upham at wupham@ksu.edu, or contact your local K-State Research and Extension office.

### Sidebar

**Choosing and caring for a live Christmas tree**

K-State horticulture expert Ward Upham recently outlined a few signs to indicate a cut Christmas tree should be avoided. He said:

- The needles are a dull, grayish-green color.
- The needles fail to ooze pitch when broken apart and squeezed.
- The needles feel stiff and brittle.
- The needles pull easily off the tree.

Once you get a suitable tree home, recut the trunk one inch above the original cut to open clogged, water-conducting tissues. Then, place the trunk in warm water.

Upham also reminded homeowners to locate the tree in as cool a spot as possible, away from fireplaces, wood-burning stoves and heating ducts. Keep the reservoir in the tree stand filled with water.

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**FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS**: Links used in this story

Managing Your Woodland for Firewood (Kansas Forest Service),

K-State Horticulture Newsletter, [https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html](https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html)

K-State Research and Extension local offices, [www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/stateandareamaps.html](http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/stateandareamaps.html)

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