

Ten “Green” Reasons to Heat with Wood

Wood heat...

1. Is a renewable energy source



Renewable means you don't run out. Renewable means you don't deplete the earth's resources. Wood is energy from the sun, stored by the tree as it grows. When you burn wood you are releasing this stored energy. In the dark of winter, it's like having a bit of summer sun on your hearth. As long as it's sustainably harvested, wood heat is renewable.

2. Minimizes global warming



When fuels burn, they release carbon dioxide, the greenhouse gas responsible for global warming. Burning fossil fuels such as oil and natural gas is like pumping carbon dioxide from the center of the earth into the atmosphere - a one-way trip. Wood heat is a two-way trip. When wood burns, the carbon dioxide is released, only to be absorbed again by young trees. Because trees recycle carbon dioxide, woodburning just warms you, not the globe.

3. Keeps heating dollars in your community



Stop writing checks every month to the energy utilities. Do you really want your heating dollars going to a faceless corporation or abroad? Buying cord wood usually keeps your money in your immediate area. Buying pellets usually keeps it within your state. Heating with wood enriches your community in countless ways.

4. Heats a smaller space, not your whole house



One of the biggest economic and environmental benefits of a wood or pellet stove is that you can specifically heat the part of your house you use most. The basement and bedrooms stay cool, and other parts of the house you don't use don't need to be constantly heated. Regardless of what you pay for energy, space heating with wood can clip at least 25% right off the top.

5. Is much cleaner than it used to be



Pre-1990 wood stoves usually emitted 30-60 grams of pollution particles per hour. Most of today's wood stoves emit fewer than 4.5 gr/hr, and the best emit fewer than 1.5 gr/hr. Pellet and corn stoves are even cleaner, emitting under 2.5 gr/hr or 1.0gr/hr.

6. Is an affordable energy for working families



Unlike solar and geothermal, wood heat is accessible for all economic classes. Hundreds of millions of dollars in tax credits and rebates go to wealthier families who install solar and geothermal systems, but wood heat is a vital mainstay for millions of working families who cannot necessarily afford to install cleaner, efficient biomass appliances. Wood heat is the everyman's renewable.

7. Raises your energy I.Q.



Flick the switch, turn up the thermostat. Now, what did that cost? What impact did it have on the natural world? What sins were committed in getting that energy to you? You're in touch when you heat with wood. And working for your heat makes you more likely to insulate. That log you placed on the fire is a tangible measure of the cost on the environment to keep your family warm. It's the wood heat way of knowledge.

8. Creates jobs in rural areas



Wood heat creates tens of thousands of jobs in forestry, transportation and retail sectors. Unlike solar and wind power, which often rely on imported technology, wood heat makes lots of jobs in our own rural areas.

9. Wood heat helps us be self-reliant



Wood heat helps us to be responsible for our own energy consumption and to be aware of its impact, rather than the NIMBY attitudes that are content to have impacts of energy felt in someone else's community, either here or abroad. It also helps us be dependent, freeing us from reliance on other countries.

10. Allows us to save money and spend it elsewhere



We almost forgot to mention it. Wood is the cheapest heating fuel you can use if you don't live in a large city. For the poorest of families, large fossil fuel heating bills make it hard to put good food on the table during the winter. Saving money on heating allows us to give our kids opportunities, to invest in reducing other energy use, etc.

Based on "10 Good Reasons to Heat With Wood." Used with permission.

The Alliance for Green Heat is a non-profit organization that promotes high-efficiency wood combustion as a low-carbon, sustainable, and affordable heating solution.