

The logo for 'mulch.' is a bright green circle containing the word 'mulch.' in a lowercase, sans-serif font.

**Consumer Guide.**

**How to create the perfect winter fire.**

# 1. What type of fuel do I need?

The answer to this question lies in whether you are lighting a traditional open fire or a stove.



## Stove

It is crucial to know whether your stove is a multi-fuel model, or if it burns wood only. Burning the wrong type of fuel can damage the vents.



## Open Fire

All available household fuels are suitable for burning in an open fire. Open fires are not as efficient as stoves however, and so a larger quantity of fuel is generally needed.

## Firewood



The size of the stove (Small, Medium or Large) will determine the size of the firewood logs you need. All stove manufacturers specify that firewood must contain a minimum of 20% moisture.

## Firewood



It is important to ensure that firewood is properly dried to allow for easier lighting, a longer-lasting fire and to avoid “spitting”

## Coal

If you have a multi-fuel stove, coal helps to keep your fire lasting much longer. eCoal, an eco-friendly fuel product, is ideal for stoves as it burns significantly longer than other coal products, generates very little ash and it is made from 50% renewable materials.



## Coal

Value coal products are mostly recommended for open fires as more fuel will be required, and they generally provide a good flame which is necessary to project heat



## Peat Briquettes

Technically, briquettes can be burned in some stoves, however they generate large quantities of ash, which can be problematic for small stove ash-trays.



## Peat Briquettes

Briquettes are also suitable for open fires as they can generate good heat and fires have larger ash-trays or grates which can accommodate the large quantities of ash



## 2. Choosing & Storing Firewood

There are a number of important questions you should consider before selecting the most suitable firewood for your home.

### Is it Softwood or Hardwood?

Hardwood burns for longer than Softwood as it is much denser. However, the majority of forestry in Ireland is Softwood, which contains more air molecules making it burn quicker.

### How much moisture does it contain?

Most stove manufacturers specify that firewood must contain a minimum of 20% moisture to avoid damaging the unit. Firewood containing less than 20% moisture will also burn much more efficiently in both open fires and stoves.

### How do I know how much moisture is in the wood?

The person selling it to you should be able to clarify this. If not, a good rule of thumb is that on placing the palm of your hand against the open side of the wood, it should feel dry. Softwood sourced in Ireland would need a minimum of about 6 months air drying in a warm environment before it is ready to burn.

### What is kiln-dried wood?

Kiln drying is the process of removing the maximum moisture from timber in a purpose built kiln, using a combination of heat and airflow.

### How much wood do I need?

This will depend on whether you are burning it in an open fire or a stove. When buying in large quantities, it is crucial that you have enough space to store the wood properly however.

### How should I store my wood?

Firewood must be stored up off ground in a dry but windy place. It should be stacked to allow for maximum airflow between the logs to ensure they remain fully dry.



### 3. Lighting & Maintaining a Fire

There are many variations to creating the perfect fire and most people have their own tried and trusted method. Here is an approach that is sure to work for both open fires and multi-fuel stoves:



#### Step 1.

##### **Tinder - creates the flame:**

Your tinder should be made from materials which will easily catch a flame when lit with a match or lighter. Tinder can include dry paper screwed into loose balls, dry cardboard such as egg boxes or toilet roll inserts. To save time you can use a firelighter.

#### Step 2.

##### **Kindling - encourages the flame:**

Kindling is generally made up of very dry timber, in thin sticks, which will catch fire very easily. You can buy kindling, or make your own at home. It should be stacked loosely on top of the flame once lit.



#### Step 3.

##### **Firewood - keeps the flame lit:**

Once the kindling has established a flame, you should stack 1 or 2 firewood logs loosely on top and allow these to catch fire.

#### Step 4.

##### **Coal - establishes a base for the fire to last:**

Once a good blaze is established, you should place 5 or 6 nuggets of coal on top, allowing them to fall through the fire to establish a longer-lasting base than if you are using firewood only.



#### Step 5.

##### **Firewood - maintains the fire:**

To keep the fire burning, you should stack a number of logs of firewood on top and replace as needed. Hardwood, with little moisture, will burn longest.

#### Tip

##### **Do not put too much fuel on at once:**

It is important to always allow air to circulate. Whether you need to replace the coal or not will depend on how long you want the fire to be lit for and what coal product you are using.

# Top Tips

If the screen of your stove is black, it means you have been burning the wrong fuel, or wood with more than 20% moisture and this will have most likely damaged the vents and could render the manufacturers warrantee void.

Check if you are living in one of the 29 densely populated urban areas around Ireland which are covered by the 'smoky coal ban'. There are a wide range of "Smokeless Fuel" products available countrywide which are cleaner, but also more heat efficient.

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