

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you are collecting your own wood:



Ensure that the required permits or approvals are obtained from the land holder or land manager prior to collecting your firewood.



Collect smaller living trees or branches.



Do not collect:

- mature trees that contain hollows,
- standing dead trees,
- logs that have hollows or may form hollows if left to decay,
- logs covered in >50% moss or fungi



Collect waste wood from designated production forests. Seasonal permits for collecting firewood for personal use can be obtained from Sustainable Timber Tasmania. www.sttas.com.au/using-our-forests/firewood-permits



IF YOU WITNESS ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES IN THE BUSH, PLEASE REPORT THE CRIME TO BUSH WATCH ON 131 444

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

If you are buying your wood:



Purchase wood from Firewood Association of Australia accredited sellers or sellers that collect or source their wood legitimately from forestry operations or other sustainably managed forests and plantations.



Can the vendor tell you where the wood has come from? Is it from an area approved for timber collection? Don't be afraid to ask questions and consider refusing the purchase if the vendor cannot give you clear information.



Ensure that your firewood has not been collected from areas listed as critical habitat for endangered species.



When available, purchase plantation timber instead of native forest or woodland timber.



Where possible, purchase recycled wood, such as old fence posts or mill off-cuts (be careful not to burn treated wood).

For more information, visit:
www.nrmsouth.org.au/firewood



National
Landcare
Program



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DO YOU BURN WOOD?

You're not alone!! In fact, Tasmanians are Australia's biggest consumers of firewood.

Up to 33% of Tasmania's rural households rely on firewood as their primary heating source. Collecting firewood is also an important traditional and cultural pursuit for many.

A large proportion of firewood is supplied through an informal 'backyard' industry and much of it is illegally harvested. It's a common misconception that firewood is a free resource and a person's right to collect.

WHAT IS ILLEGAL HARVESTING?

It's illegal to take wood from public land without a permit or from private land without landholder permission. This includes cutting down living or standing dead trees or collecting wood, such as branches and logs, from the ground.

WHY IS IT A PROBLEM?

Illegal firewood harvesting isn't just an environmental problem, it can have hidden costs for your back pocket too!

FAIR PRACTICE

Are you getting what you paid for? Illegally harvested wood can be 'green' and doesn't burn well. You also may not be getting the weight you paid for. Casual sellers, including illegal harvesters, have minimal business overheads and do not pay for the resource, putting legitimate sellers at a disadvantage.

SAFETY

Working with chainsaws, working alone or felling trees is not only dangerous, but potentially fatal. There were 23 chainsaw use and tree felling related deaths in Tasmania between 2000 and 2016. Overloaded vehicles and unsecured loads pose a risk to the vehicle's occupants and other road users.

LEGAL ISSUES

Illegally harvested wood is stolen property, and purchasing stolen goods is also a crime. Firewood sellers who sell wood informally may not be paying any tax.

COMMUNITY DISCORD

Trespass, theft and damage to private property and infrastructure often accompany illegal harvesting.



Some of our native animals are directly threatened by the removal of mature and dead standing trees as they rely on tree hollows for shelter and breeding.

Hollows are produced by environmental processes that occur over long periods and trees with hollows suitable for wildlife are generally more than 150 years old.

Fallen timber from the forest floor is also vital habitat for mammals, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates and is extremely important for mosses, lichen, fungi, liverworts and micro-organisms (such as bacteria, small fungi and algae) which play an important role in returning nutrients to the soil.

BIOSECURITY

Weeds, diseases and pathogens can be spread from one location to another by soil or water on boots, clothing, tyres and equipment. This poses a threat to the health of natural ecosystems and farms. e.g. phytophthora root rot (dieback disease).

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

The off-road passage of heavy vehicles related to firewood harvesting can cause excessive rutting of tracks and roads, sedimentation in streams due to poor creek crossings, and soil compression leading to soil structure decline. Loss of vegetation cover in rural areas exacerbates dry land salinity.

Fuel spills and escaped fires from camp fires are also a problem. Dumping of domestic waste is also often associated with illegal harvesting.

BIODIVERSITY LOSS

Taking old or standing dead trees or fallen logs has a direct impact on many animals through habitat degradation and loss. It is particularly bad for animals and birds that rely on tree hollows for shelter and breeding.

AIR POLLUTION

Burning poor quality (i.e. green) wood significantly increases air pollution.

Image credits: Chris Tzaroz, Dave Curtis, Dave Watts, Dejan Stojanovic and Eric Woehler.