Many Marion County Residents heat their homes with firewood. It is plentiful and inexpensive especially when compared to electricity and natural gas.

What species of trees make the best firewood? Any wood will burn, but certain species will prove to be more efficient and have more potential heat content. This heat content is measured in British Thermal Units or BTU’s. A BTU is a measure of the amount of heat required to raise the temperature of one pound of water by one degree Fahrenheit.

The heat value of wood depends on its density and moisture content, or the amount of water in the wood. The drier and more dense the wood the more heat is released when properly burned.

Hardwood trees tend to be denser than softwood trees. Best types of firewood trees include: Hickory, Oak and Black Locust. Poor firewood trees include: Pine, Sweetgum, and Willow. See USDA Forest Service Leaflet No. 559 for species overall ratings.

“Green” Versus “Seasoned” Firewood—If you are buying firewood and you want to use it soon, be sure to buy seasoned firewood. A simple method to determine if your firewood is dry is to strike two pieces together. A sharp crackling sound means that the wood is fairly dry. A dull thud means that the moisture content is still high. Dry wood will also display cracks in the end grain along the cut surface. The more surface area without bark that is exposed to air, the more rapidly the firewood will dry. Even small round pieces of wood should be split for drying. Whenever possible store firewood up off of the ground and covered with plastic or a tarp.

Burning firewood is satisfying, but it can also be dangerous. The most common problem is that burning wood causes creosote to form in stovepipes and chimneys. When wood is burned in a stove or fireplace gases and vapors are produced. These gases and vapors are carried up the stovepipe or chimney where they condense and form creosote. Creosote is combustible and can cause chimney fires if not periodically removed from inside of the stovepipe or chimney. Creosote can be minimized by burning dry wood.

Pesticide Applicator Training to be Held

Producers who wish to renew an expiring pesticide license or receive a first time private pesticide applicator license will have the opportunity to receive the required training February 7th. If you are up for recertification you will have gotten a letter from the State Plant Board notifying you that your certification is up.

The training will be held at Marion County Fairgrounds in the upstairs of the community building on Tuesday February 7th at 6:00 p.m.

Pesticide Applicator Training is a two-hour course to certify Arkansas agricultural producers who wish to purchase and apply Restricted Use Pesticides (RUP’s). However, the information presented could also be useful for anyone interested in learning more about pesticide regulations, labeling, application equipment and safety issues. This training is NOT for certification of commercial (for-hire) pesticide applicators.

There is a $10 per person fee which must be paid at the door at the time of training. This fee is not related to the licensing fees charged by the State Plant Board. It is only for the training. The fee for the license is $10 for one (1) year or $45 for five (5) years. That amount you will pay in later to the State Plant Board, not the Marion Co. Extension Office.

Topics to be covered include pesticide labeling and safety, drift, equipment and calibration, integrated pest management and pesticide regulations.
Garlic cloves can be planted through the fall into early January. As they grow you can harvest leaves when six or more leaves are present, pick the oldest leaves first. Use these older leaves like scallions. In the spring as the plants begin to grow more rapidly you can harvest the plants and use them as “green garlic”. You may harvest the bulbs in July when the tops start to dry.

Plant shallots late January to February. They can be pulled as green onions when the tops are 6 to 8 inches tall or wait and harvest bulbs when the tops die down. Handle the bulbs much like dry onions. Store in a mesh bag in cool dry conditions.

Lettuce can be grown in Arkansas 10 months out of the year with the use of row cover or a cold frame. Ideally, lettuce grows best when the mean day temperature is 60 to 70 degrees. Unprotected lettuce should be planted early spring or late summer. It is not recommended to plant head lettuce in Arkansas. It must be transplanted and is susceptible to soft rots when exposed to frequent rains. Harvest lettuce whenever it is large enough to use. Harvest by cutting every other plant at ground level to allow more room for remaining plants to grow larger.

English Peas can be planted when the soil temperature is 45 degrees or higher. Garden peas can be harvested when the pea pods appear round. Harvest a few pods every day or two to determine when peas are at proper stage for eating. Peas are best when they are immature and fully expanded but not hard and starchy. Peas should be picked immediately before cooking because they do not keep well, much like corn.

Australian Peas maybe planted in the garden as a cover crop for the fall and winter. They maybe tilled in as a green manure in the spring to return nitrogen to the soil.

As always remember to soil test so you can lime the soil now if needed.

Q: Is it safe to vaccinate pregnant cows?
A: Ideally we would like to avoid doing this, but sometimes we have no choice. It is safest to use a killed vaccine and read the label carefully and always keep record of the batch number!

Q: When is the next pesticide applicator training?
A: There will be one held at the Marion County Fairgrounds in the upstairs of the community building on February 7th at 6pm.

Q: Will fescue cause a mare to abort her fetus?
A: Toxic Endophyte infected fescue can cause abortions in late gestating mares. It can also cause stillborn foals. It is best to remove pregnant mares from toxic fescue 45 to 90 days before foaling.

Garden Planting Guide

**December**
- **Garlic**
- **Lime Soil**
- **Salad Greens (Protected)**
- **Order Catalogs**
- **Lettuce In Cold Frame**
- **English Peas**
- **Test Soil**
- **Order Seed**

**January**
- **Order Seed**
- **Lime Soil**
- **Salad Greens Protected**
- **Order Catalogs**
- **Lettuce In Cold Frame**
- **Spinach**
- **Add Compost**
- **Prepare Soil**
- **Test Soil**
- **English Peas**

**February**
- **Horseradish**
- **Carrots**
- **Broccoli**
- **Raddish**
- **Kale**
- **Turnips**
- **Lettuce**
- **Onions**

**Reference Factsheet FSA6062.**
Applications are now being taken in Marion and Baxter Counties for persons who want to sharpen their horticultural skills, and then share their knowledge with others. The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service will be conducting 40 hours of training. Training consists of five different one day sessions on gardening. Marion, Baxter and Boone counties will be conducting these sessions together. In return for receiving the 40 hours of training the graduate agrees to return 40 hours of volunteer time in a community project of their choosing. There is a preregistration enrollment fee of $85.00 for an individual or $120.00 for a couple who share one notebook. Enrollment is limited and is taken on a first come first serve basis. You may enroll in classes by coming to the Marion County Extension Office which is located at 313 West 7th in Yellville behind the Marion County Nursing Home. Ph: 870-449-6349. Applications will be accepted until February 15, 2017 or until the classes are full.

The 2017 Master Gardener class schedule and locations is as follows: February 28, 2017 Yellville, March 7, 2017 Mtn Home, March 14, 2017 Harrison, and March 21, 2017 Yellville. Each class begins at 8:30 am and ends at 4:30 pm.

Master Gardener Training

Planting Trees

The winter months are a good time to plant new trees in the landscape. The trees are planted and “wake up” to their new home in the spring. This reduces stress on the tree.

The first step is to select the right tree for its intended purpose. Research plants before purchasing. Be aware of disease or insects they may be susceptible to and select varieties that may have resistance to those problems.

Second, select a planting site. Look up, down and all around. Power lines above? Water Lines below? How close is the site to the house or septic tank? Know the mature size of the tree and select a site that it will fit into. Once you have a potential planting sight conduct a drainage test. Dig a hole 1 foot deep and fill it with water. If the hole drains less then one inch of water out in an hour it is a poorly drained sight. You can correct this by planting in a raised bed but this can be more costly and labor intensive.

After a site is selected, pull a soil sample from the area and send it in for testing. Make amendments according to the soil test. If the soil test calls for lime you can incorporate this at planting but it is better to plan ahead and apply lime to the site atleast 6 months before planting for best results.

When preparing a hole for the tree make the hole width 1 1/2 to 2 times the size of the root ball. Measure the depth of the root ball and dig the hole to that depth or less.

Irrigate immediately after planting and water the planting as needed depending upon weather.
In Closing...

It is my pleasure to serve the people of Marion County. "The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs and services without regard to race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. The University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture is an equal opportunity/equal access/affirmative action institution. If you require a reasonable accommodation to participate or need materials in another format, please contact us as soon as possible. Dial 711 for Arkansas Relay."

Sincerely,

Brian See
County Extension Agent – Agriculture
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