

Tasmania's rare and native species

Many of Tasmania's native plants, birds and animals are found nowhere else in the world and are directly threatened by the removal of mature trees with hollows, and logs and branches on the ground that they use for shelter and breeding.

The critically endangered understory plant Shy Susan (*Tetratheca gunnii*, pictured) is only found in the Beaconsfield hills, Tasmania. Its survival is threatened by the spread of root rot fungus, *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, and the alteration of habitat from weeds, off-road vehicle use, and illegal firewood harvesting.

The Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service remain committed to undertaking surveillance and patrol activities, related to illegal firewood harvesting, within Tasmanian conservation areas, reserves and National Parks.



Photo credit: Phillip Milner, 2021

Some information in this brochure was developed as part of the Illegal Firewood Harvesting working group convened by NRM South. For more information, visit nrmsouth.org.au/firewood

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Australian Government

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KNOW YOUR WOOD

A guide to sourcing
firewood sustainably



An important winter fuel source

Firewood is an important, regionally accessible fuel source for keeping us warm. With colder winters than the rest of Australia, Tasmania has the highest per-person rate of firewood consumption in the country.

It is everyone's responsibility to know where your firewood has come from and whether it has been sourced legally and sustainably. It is a common misconception that firewood is a free resource and a person's right to collect.



Illegal firewood harvesting

Commonly referred to as 'woodhooking', illegal firewood harvesting is the taking of firewood from public or private land without a permit and is a criminal offence. This includes:

- Cutting down living or dead standing trees; or
- Collecting already fallen timber, such as logs and branches, from the ground.

Why 'woodhooking' is a problem

Unfair trade

Illegally sourced firewood may be low-grade or 'green' meaning it does not burn well and can be a problem for air pollution as well as your wallet. Illegal suppliers, including casual sellers:

- cannot guarantee the weight of the wood they are selling you;
- do not pay for the resource they collect;
- may not be paying any tax; and
- will often sell the same quantity (or more) of lower-grade wood at a reduced price.

This negatively impacts the trade of legitimate sellers and an ecofriendly firewood industry.

Theft & trespass

Harvesting firewood from public or private land without the landholder's permission is theft and trespass. Woodhooking can lead to other illegal activity such as rubbish dumping, vandalism, and theft of other property.

Public safety

Working alone remotely, felling trees and operating chainsaws without appropriate training can be dangerous. Unroadworthy, overloaded vehicles and unsecured loads also pose a safety risk to road users.

Biosecurity

Weeds and pathogens that cause disease pose a serious threat to our natural environments and can spread via seeds, soil or water on vehicles, footwear, clothing and equipment.

The risk of environmental degradation to natural and high-conservation value areas is increased with the use of equipment and heavy, off-road vehicles related to illegal firewood harvesting, particularly on unformed tracks.

Sourcing firewood sustainably

If you are buying firewood:

- Ask questions. You should know the weight and type of the wood you're purchasing and where the wood has come from. Don't be afraid to consider other suppliers if the seller cannot provide you with clear answers.
- Seek suppliers who source firewood legally from forestry operations and plantations, or are members of the Firewood Association of Australia.

If you are collecting your own firewood:

- Be aware, timber harvesting on all land tenures, including private land, is subject to the *Forest Practices Act 1985*. Understand when a Forest Practices Plan is required.
- Obtain all appropriate permits and approvals prior to collection.
- Consider collecting waste wood from designated production forests with seasonal permits. Learn more at: sttas.com.au
- Do not collect: mature standing trees with holes (living or dead); fallen logs and large branches with hollows; logs or trees covered in moss or fungi; trees on vulnerable land; or threatened vegetation communities.

Report any suspicious or illegal activity on private or public land to Bush Watch on 131 444