

## Stacking Hand Piles

Hand piles not stacked to burn well can be a real waste of time. Partially burned debris may be left around a burned out center. Most piles need to be restacked in order to burn well. Imagine trying to light the piles in several feet of snow.

- **Compactness.** Tightly stacked boughs within piles contribute to easier and more robust fire growth by readily allowing the pre-heating and drying of adjacent fuels as well as shielding pile interiors from moisture.
- **Height & Size. Start out small.** Three to five feet is a pile height for experienced burners. Taller piles can easily generate enough heat to scorch nearby trees. Heat from large piles makes it difficult to get close to control them.
- Consider a number of **small piles** versus one large pile. Burning small piles in different locations decreases the impacts on soil and increases the chance for blueberries and other vegetation to return.

## Hand Pile Location

Consider the following factors when placing burn piles on or near your lot.

- Leave at least twenty feet of space between individual hand piles and structures and/or trees that you do not want to damage. Radiant heat from burning piles can ignite or damage nearby buildings and scorch nearby trees. Convective heat can scorch overhanging branches. Do not build a burn pile beneath a power line.
- Remember embers may fly a distance from a pile and ignite debris beneath a deck or a wood pile stacked next to a building.

## Burn Permits and Timing

- Burn permits are required and are managed by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in Minnesota. You may view the rules and get a permit online at: <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/burningpermits>.
- Burn permits are not required if there are at least three inches of snow on the ground.
- A day with no wind after several days of a soaking rain may be a good day to burn. A cold, snowy day may be a good day to enjoying a crackling fire.

# Hand Piling Woody Debris for Burning

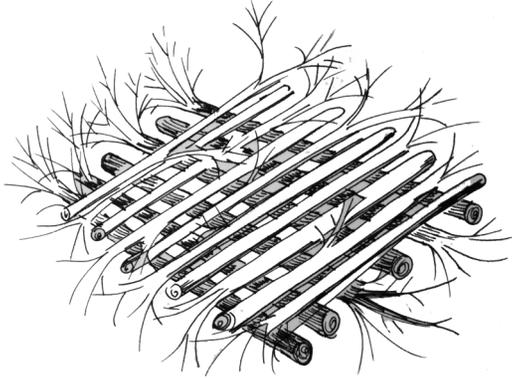
Many cabin owners construct hand piles in order to create defensible space in case of wildfires. This brochure has been compiled as a helpful aid for building easy-to-burn hand piles.



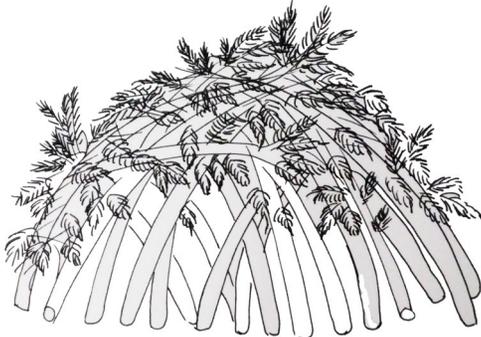
**Think Small, Not Tall**

# Hand Piling

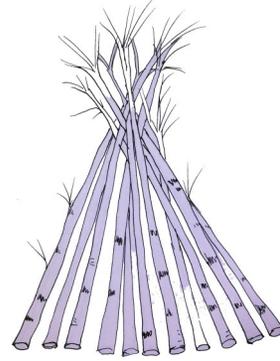
Several effective stacking methods are shown. Personal preference and the nature of materials to be stacked will affect which one you choose.



Cross hatching can be a good base for a burn pile or for a feeder pile, especially if the burning is done when there is snow on the ground. The base keeps the fine fuels away from the moisture on the ground.



Dome-shaped piles are a natural result with brushy material, including shrubs and conifer bows. Large amounts of conifer needles provide a good cap against infiltrating moisture.



Teepee piles are not inherently compact and can be difficult to ignite during wet conditions. Covering the teepee until time to burn will help. Teepees can also be built as a feeder pile.



**Feeder piles** are a good way to burn a large amount of debris safely. Material can be pulled from a larger pile into a new smaller pile. The small pile can be kept under better control and can be burned in a smaller clearing. Feeder piles allow you to regulate the size of the fire. Dry tinder may be used to start the fire.



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