

CHARCOAL HEARTH

Steps in building the pile

Walt Landgraf, November 2006

1. Hearth cleared and leveled, 30 ft. to 40 ft. in diameter.
2. Wood delivered and organized.
 - a. Billets: Wood 4 ft. long, 4 in. to 7 in. in diameter.
 - b. Lapwood: Wood 4 ft. long 1.5 to 4 in. in diameter.
3. Fagan pole 18 ft high set in the center of the hearth to guide pile formation.
4. Three-sided chimney made out of lapwood, built to the height of the pile.
5. Pile constructed of billets and lapwood, twenty foot in diameter at the foot and fourteen feet high to the head. (foot, waist, shoulder, head, and filled in with lap wood). Average of thirty cords of wood per pile.
6. Pile covered with leaves or ferns.
7. Pile dusted with fine dirt to a depth of one foot on the head. This allowed control of air entering the pile.
8. Chimney filled with small wood and fired with coals from campfire.
9. Firing required 10 to 14 days to reach post or foot, meaning all chemicals except carbon had been driven out of the wood and charcoal had been formed The yield was about thirty-five to forty bushels per cord.
10. Cooling and opening the pile required up to one week.

