
Holz Hausen Experiment - Results!

Contributed by David Soede
Wednesday, 01 September 2010
Last Updated Sunday, 12 September 2010

Finally the results of the Holz Hausen vs Ricks (standard wood rows) are in and there is a clear winner! Common sense has prevailed over ludicrous untested claims - and the winner is Standard Ricks!!

Here is the actual experiment data:

Holz Hausen vs Rick Experiment - Results

Here is my summary of findings:

-

Standard Ricks are a standout winner in the seasoning stakes over a HH. Ricks started with an average of 52% MC and fell to an average of 25% MC for a 27% MC fall, compared to the HH which started with an average of 51% MC and fell to 32% MC (those percentages are rounded hence the apparent discrepancy - the excel spreadsheet has the exact figures) for a 20% MC fall, which means the ricks lost a further 7% MC than the HH over the 18 months / 2 summers seasoning - or lost a third more moisture than the Holz Hausen. This is a significant difference in my opinion.

-

The claim that a Holz Hausen can accelerate seasoning of firewood, even accomplishing it in 3 months, is ludicrous. Wood seasons with sun and wind and the more exposure to sun and wind the faster it seasons, so it makes complete sense to me that ricks would enjoy a significant advantage over HH's.

-

The wood inside a HH seasons more slowly than wood in the outside ring. Mine even had some type of mould / fungus growing on it, which whilst it might be a new generation of penicillin, still doesn't help the seasoning and shows how damp and humid the air was all the time inside the HH. Again, this makes sense as per the above points on seasoning.

-

Of some surprise to me was that the difference between the 4 compass points on the HH in terms of seasoning benefits from direct sunshine, was minimal. 2% better for North over South (remember I'm Down Under) - I would have thought it was much greater, but that's what careful measurement and experimentation is about.

-

-

-

-

-

-

-

-

-

-

-

-

I "lost" a fair few of my measurement pieces (nearly all the confier, but some of the paperbark and blue gum too) due to

writing the initial weight on the split in pencil. Stupid me, too lazy to get a crayon or something better, and I had a hard time even identifying some of the measurement splits and weights, even though I had written on both ends and on the middle of the split when recording the initial data. So the sample size is smaller than anticipated or expected. This meant I couldn't do some comparisons such as between east-west and north-south ricks, or seasoning rates between species under the same conditions.

However, the main outcome I was seeking was a clear refutation or upholding of the Holz Hausen accelerated seasoning claims, and I certainly feel I got that in spades. Don't get me wrong, I quite like Holz Hausens and can see a place for them, when one requires high volume of firewood storage in a small footprint, and I can see why some regard them as much better aesthetically - although I quite like my long ricks of firewood seasoning against my fence. You would have to leave them for much longer to get the same seasoning results though.

I have also collected lots of data of the weather experienced throughout the experiment, which I hope to get around to processing later. I want to be able to say under these conditions (temperature or degree days, with this humidity and this much wind) these species with this density seasoned this much. However, that's just quantifying the seasoning rate which isn't as important as improving the process. Thanks to everyone for following my experiment and I hope it "busts the myth" about Holz Hausen's and their seasoning rates.