

### **Our life changed for a pellet stove**

Owning a pellet stove does take some work and maintenance to keep the home heated.

When we made our final decision to purchase the pellet stove over the furnace, we had to ask help from a few friends. This help included a truck to pick up the unit and help to open our brick wall for the exhaust.

A friend, who works with concrete and masonry agreed to help with his truck and masonry skills. Also, prior to purchasing and installing the unit, a hearth pad needed to be made. Because our living room has all hardwood floors, an elevated hearth pad, with carpeting under the pad help protect the floor from scratching and heat from the stove.

The process took us a few hours to pick-up, deliver and install the unit. The stove we purchased weighs over 400 pounds. The reason it took a few hours to install the piping was the fact that the men had to break through two layers of brick to open the wall for the exhaust pipe.

The stove was started on February 19, 2008. We have not used the central furnace system since this time.

When the stove is turned on, there is a thermostat that helps control the amount of heat generated to heat our home. My husband decided, since our regular thermostat for the central furnace was located in the hallway of our ranch home, the thermostat for the pellet stove would also be located here. Now that we are not using our central furnace, the main thermostat sits idle, although, being digital, it allows us to more accurately gauge how warm the bedrooms are heated.

Prior to starting with this stove, our furnace was set to a temperature of 68 degrees.

Because of the cost of gas, we could not afford to increase the temperature. With the stove, we are now able to keep the temperature set at 70 to 72 degrees on the main floor of our house with the basement of our house staying about 60 degrees.

But how does the stove work to maintain these warm temperatures?

At the top of the stove, there is a hopper that holds the fuel. An auger provides the operation to move the fuel from the hopper into the burn pot that is located in the front of the stove. Depending on the weather outside, we typically make sure the hopper is full in the morning and in the evening.

Plastic tubs are located to the left of our stove currently, that hold the fuel until we move the fuel into the stove's hopper for use. Also, depending on the weather, we refill the two tubs every week to week and a half with two bags of pellets and two bags of corn each using eight bags of fuel total.

The burn pot then heats up the pellets and corn to the burning point, where it starts to flame. After a certain amount of time, typically 15 minutes, a blower kicks on, allowing the heat to release to the living room and throughout the house. We help the process of moving the heat through the use of box fans.

When we check the hopper's level, we also turn the stove off, allowing us to empty the burn pot. The stove burns the fuel creating a "biscuit" remain of the fuel. Depending on how often the biscuit is removed, it often looks like a blackened rice cake. The suggestion from the

manufacturer is to empty this burn pot once a day, however, we keep this process running twice a day so the biscuit doesn't grow too large.

We have other maintenance processes that we have to do with the unit. Every few days, we clean the front glass as ash tends to build up on it. Once a day, we vacuum the unit while we are emptying the burn pot. Finally, once a week we do a complete clean out of the unit, cleaning the heating pipe and internal areas that store the ash and biscuits.

By being persistent with the maintenance of this stove, we know we will have this stove for years to come.

Owning this type of heating source does require devotion and a change of attitude toward heating our home. We don't just "hit the button" to turn on our furnace. This heating source requires maintenance and can't be ignored like home owners often do to a central furnace.

We know that this heating solution may not be for everyone, but if you're a homeowner, it doesn't hurt to look into it. More and more home owners are looking into this as a heating solution and a money-saving solution.

We enjoy our stove and enjoy the fact that our home stays warmer with the stove running.

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### Photos and captions



This is the US Stove model 6220 corn-fed furnace. Typically, this stove costs \$3,300 to purchase. When we decided to purchase it, the furnace was on sale for \$1,799 at a Tractor Supply Company. This furnace heats a home up to 2,200 square feet.



This the Quadra-Fire Santa Fe model, owned by Ritchie. This model heats a home up to 1,500 square feet.

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The Quadra-Fire Classic Bay 1200 (CB 1200) that we decided to purchase. This is the first model developed and sold by Quadra-Fire and heats a home up to 2,500 square feet.



This is a photo of our CB 1200 in our living room, sitting atop our home made hearth. Our living area is the living room and dining room combination, a 13 by 28 foot room, with the stove about half way down our outside wall.

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This is a photo of the 50/50 corn/pellet combination mix to fuel the stove.