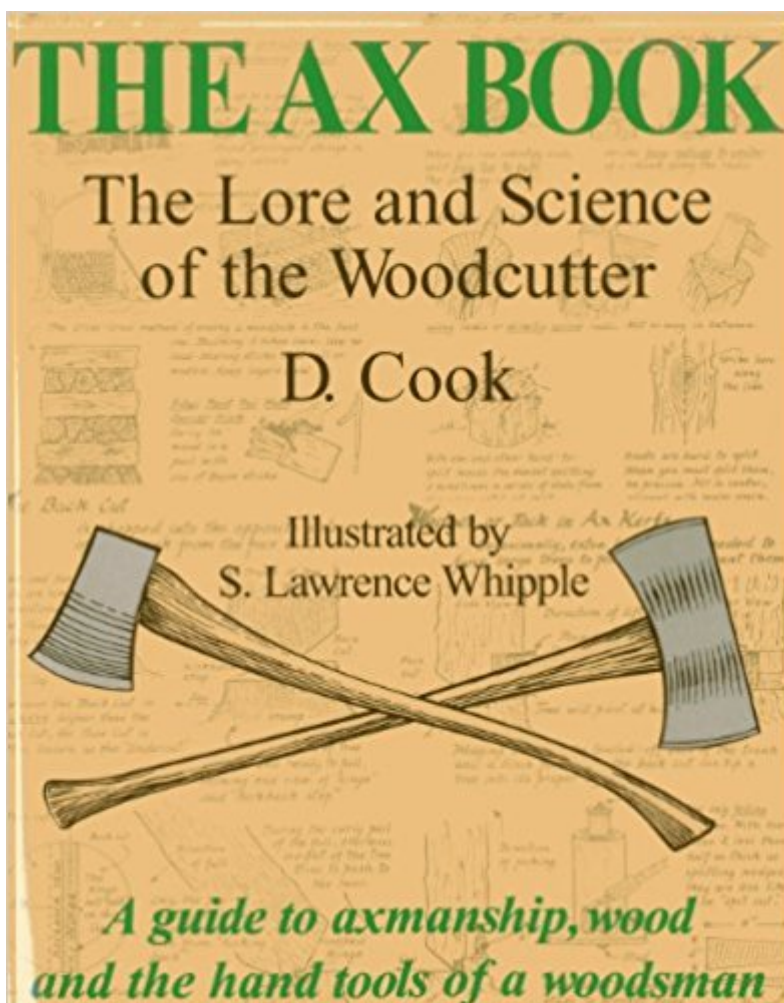


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# The Ax Book: The Lore And Science Of The Woodcutter



## Synopsis

The Ax Book is a thorough guide to cutting wood with hand tools. The author explains how to use various types of axes, hatchets, mauls, saws and wedges to take down trees and prepare firewood. In addition he shows every aspect of dealing with wood from the forest right to the hearth or stove.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"From tree selection to fireside cheer, Cook takes the reader every step in the wood-harvesting process, tree felling, climbing, bucking, wood handling, splitting, cutting to size, storing and burning... vivid, entertaining anecdotes from a lifetime of experience." Bud Leavitt, Bangor (ME) Daily News "

Originally published in 1981 by Universe Books as "Keeping Warm with an Ax, " The Ax Book is a thorough guide to cutting wood with hand tools. Although it is one of man's most ancient tools, the ax remains the standard tool of the woodman, and has been brought to a high degree of perfection. The author explains how to use various types of axes, hatchets, mauls, saws and wedges to take down trees and prepare firewood. In addition he shows every aspect of dealing with wood from the forest right to the hearth or stove. Throughout recorded time, the ax has been a principle tool for carving out from the wilderness the homes, farms, and roads so necessary to the advance of civilization. Even today, those who use chainsaws and other power equipment still need to be familiar with the hand tools of their craft. In many situations, only a hand-ax will suffice for the felling

of trees, the rough shaping of lumber, the creation of firewood, and clearing out the nooks and crannies of forested areas for other purposes -- including the planting of new trees. Cook's The Ax Book is an ideal "how to" manual of instruction enhanced with the illustrations of Whipple to provide what is simply the best introductory guide to the subject available to readers today. The Ax Book is a "must" for anyone needing to use a hand ax for any purpose, under any circumstances. The ax is an indispensable tool for every woodsman. Even those who use chainsaws and other power equipment need to be familiar with the hand tools of their craft. In many situations, nothing will do but an ax. This book has been proven to be an ideal resource for anyone who wishes to fell trees and take lumber or firewood from the forest.

There are three kinds of "howto" books. The basic 123 books. Great for a novice that wants more exposure to the subject or the weekend warrior that doesn't care. Then there are dry technical books that cover great detail, the kind you go to for reference to refresh your memory. Then there is the third kind which this book fits into. The learning experience, a book you can read from cover to cover and by the end you've learned something. Not really a turn to page # and reference this topic or look up this subject. But the way this is written, you come as close to gaining from the author's experience as you could from a written work. I'd really recommend this book if you have any interest in axes or crosscut saws or wood cutting in general. It's well written and a good read. The description of the hurricane of 38 for example, I really enjoyed.

This fine book tells you in an easily understandable way everything you need to know about safely and efficiently selecting, felling, cutting, splitting, and storing firewood. It tells you which woods keep most easily for long-term storage, which are easy or difficult to split, how hot and for how long the woods burn. And it tells you a lot more that I didn't mention. The focus is on doing it all with axes. The author tells you how to select the right axe and how to maintain your axe. He also tells you enough about manual saws and chainsaws that I still highly recommend the book even if you don't ever plan to swing an axe or a maul, but plan to do it all with chainsaws and wood splitters. The book contains a few anecdotes related to its topic; they all make useful points.

This is an revision of "Keeping Warm With an Ax: A Woodcutter's Handbook", from 1981. It claims to be a revision, but I don't see much difference between the two. Whatever may have been added or deleted seems to be minimal from a comparison of random pages. Just be aware that it is a update so you don't end up buying both it and Keeping Warm With an Ax: A Woodcutter's Handbook like I

did. It is still one of the best books, if not the best, on selecting and using an axe that I have read among the limited number of books on the axe. Cook's emphasis on safety is well presented, with a concept of "frontal zone" as the area extending from one's feet forward at the width of the outsides of the feet, with objects to be cut to the left or right of this zone. Use of a frontal zone will mean that any swing that misses or ricochets will miss the user because it is already past the user. This is a concept that I had not seen before, yet makes much sense for safety. I strongly recommend this book. In the very limited genre on axes, it is a gem well worth reading and studying. In fact, I have bought several copies to give to my axe-using friends and relatives.

I am not a lumberjack nor do I plan to become one, but I do fell an occasional tree and wanted to know how to do it better with a variety of tools. While the book focuses on doing so with an axe, the author also covers other methods and will indicate which is best under different circumstances. The author's knowledge and expertise obviously came from growing up and using an axe extensively in an era when the axe was the primary tool used for woodcutting, but he has not limited the text to only the use of an axe. I'm amazed that he appears to have left few details out, large or small. Only someone who had experienced getting a wedge "spit out" of a kerf would think of recommending methods to prevent it. This book is about performing difficult, dangerous timbering tasks more efficiently and safely. The prose is engaging and the illustrations well drawn and helpful. Yes it is from the past and about mostly by-gone methods. But given the global instability and cost of a chainsaw's most critical resource, fuel, the methods are certainly good to have in a man's toolkit, even today. Besides, few things feel better than bringing a good sized hardwood to the ground, just where you wanted it, with nothing but sharp steel, muscle and a little practical physics. Regardless of whether or not you do it frequently, having the confidence and skills to be able to, makes this book well worth its price.

I have used axes and other cutting tools for at least 60 yrs. maybe a little longer, yet I still find this book interesting and hard for me to put down.

Axes and hatchets used to be a mainstay of life not too long ago. Much of the knowledge of selecting, using, and caring for these vital tools would have been lost, but D. Cook has made sure that is not the case. Everything that you want to know about these great tools and their use is between the covers of this great book.

Great information presented as part history,nostalgia and how to. Important safety guidelines,care,use and selection of axes as well as a section on crosscut saws. Choosing wood,felling,stacking and storage tips. A book you may read more than once. Put down the chain saw and take a small step back in time.

Always loved swinging an axe. Hate running & get my "runner's high" chopping wood. Always an amateur, but trying to up my game. There's a lot of good information here & written in an old style I really enjoy.

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