

## Tipi Pole Requirements

Poles need to be as strong, straight, stiff and smooth as possible!

Dimensions: For a 6m tipi for example, the poles need to be 6m from the base to the crossover point. Above that is up to you, longer towards a point is aesthetically pleasing, shorter may be more practical. At the crossover point, poles need to be approx 50mm diameter. Larger, up to 60mm for 7m tipis; smaller, down to 40mm for 5m and 4m tipis. Measure where this diameter point is and then measure towards the base the required length and cut. The base should be as small a diameter as possible but will depend on the species.

Straightness: A pole may look dead straight from a distance, but when eyeballed from directly below they can be quite bent. Small kinks and character are fine, but too much bend overall and the pole will always try to sag. Poles can be straightened if dried from green by reversing the bend and securing while it cures.

Strength/Durability: Preferably find a species that has some ground contact durability, or if not possible the base will need to be treated or protected from ground contact. For less durable species the other area of concern is the crossover point which is bound by rope and can hold some moisture. Plantation conifers are ideal particularly when grown in dense stands (ex nursery, self seeded etc) We used to harvest 20-25 yr old Douglass that has grown self seeded under a larger parent crop, dense and searching for light. Like this they grow super straight and with close growth rings (durable and strong) and little sapwood. Often even at 20 yrs old they will be 100mm or so at the base. Otherwise folk have used Kanuka, Beech, Eucalyptus, Bamboo etc. Dry / season straight and thoroughly.

Finish: Poles need to be as smooth as possible. A certain amount of rain will collect on the poles above the tipi. A few drips will drip from the very centre (into the raincatcher, or fire area below), but most will run down the underside of the poles to the ground. Any roughness that drips can drip from, they will! With softwoods, the bark can sometimes be peeled off to leave a smooth finish, but mostly you will need to strip and sand smooth.

Treatment: Depending on the species' durability, you can stain/oil, oil with Linseed, protect the base with a bitumen or mole seal, or if you are not averse, some serious chemical like Metalex will protect the bases better than anything else!

Numbers: Usually multiples of 3. The first 3 poles are 'tripod' poles and will be your sturdiest. The other poles fit in between these. 4m tipi 9 poles; 5m 12 poles; 6m 15 poles; 7m 18 poles. And you will need a further 2 poles for holding the smoke flaps. These will be your lightest, skinniest poles. These will be cut at approximately 1m longer than the size of the tipi and a small diameter (20-30mm) at the top

Good Luck!