



## ***LITTLE FOOT YURTS*** ***FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS***

### **WHO MAKES YOUR YURTS ?**

We (Alex and Selene Cole) have been building yurts since 2003 and are co-owners of Little Foot Yurts, which started in 2005. Silas Hanavan, our yurt building apprentice started working with Little Foot Yurts full time in 2013. Our yurt building days stemmed from an interest in natural building when we moved to an eco arts centre called Coed Hills Rural Artspace in Wales. The centre inspired us to start Little Foot Yurts and provided a knowledge and understanding of permaculture and coppicing, which provide the basis for our sustainable business ethics and practices.

### **WHAT IS COPPICE –THE METHOD OF FORESTRY YOU USE?**

Coppice is an ancient form of silver culture which has been tried and tested for thousands of years in Europe. The idea is to harvest the limbs from the re-growth of hardwood stools (tree stump). By this method the tree stays alive and can yield low cost lumber for hundreds of years. Coppice also prolongs the life of the tree and enhances the local fauna and flora of the woodland. For more information on this topic, a great book to read is Coppiced Woodlands, Their Management for Wildlife by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee of England.

### **WHY ARE YOUR YURTS GENERALLY MORE EXPENSIVE COMPARED TO MODERN YURT COMPANIES?**

Our production methods and techniques are very different from modern style yurts, which use sawn wood for the entire frame, aircraft cable for the tension band and laminated components. Traditional style yurts have an organic look and in the building processes do require a lot more labour, which reflects the higher price we charge compared to modern style yurts. Each roof pole is cut by hand, draw knifed, tapered, dried, sanded and finished with linseed oil. Our sales prices are comparable to traditional yurt companies in England and Wales.

### **WHAT SIZE OF YURT IS IDEAL FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR OR SMALL GUESTHOUSE?**

We would recommend a 17-20ft yurt. These sizes of yurts will provide ample space for a family of four, and will be easy to maintain and heat.

### **HOW LONG DOES A YURT LAST?**

The wooden frame of a yurt is built to last indefinitely. We use a treated cotton canvas which will last between ten to fifteen years, depending on how you care for it (for example: regular brushing to remove debris will prolong it's life) Using a breathable

*hand-made coppice wood yurts*

1459 White Rock Rd, RR#1, Wolfville, NS, B4P 2R1 902 670-4556 [info@lfy.ca](mailto:info@lfy.ca) [www.lfy.ca](http://www.lfy.ca)

membrane such as cotton combined with felt panels and wood stove provides a healthy, warm and easy to maintain shelter. The traditional simplicity of our design allows our yurt components to be easily replaced as needed.

### WHAT KIND OF COVERINGS DO YOU USE?

We use an Egyptian cotton canvas called Sunforger, which is tested to CPAI 84 and S109 ULC for fire retardency (Canadian standard for public access event spaces). It is a treated canvas, which is rot, mildew, water and UV resistant. This canvas provides an excellent weather resistant covering that is both natural and breathable, allowing condensation to escape whilst keeping the harshest of weathers out. The benefits of a breathable natural membrane such as canvas instead of vinyl plastic are as follows: significantly less condensation, no off gassing, more aesthetically pleasing, lighter, and easier to repair.

### HOW CAN I BEST CARE FOR MY YURT?

Our yurts are made from almost all natural materials, so the wood needs to be oiled twice a year and the canvas must be stored properly when taken down. A maintenance package is available if you want Little Foot Yurts to assemble, take down, and maintain your yurt over a period of time. An accumulation of dirt or soiling can create an ideal environment for bacteria to grow and can cause staining of the fabric. It is important that this be removed by regular brushing to maintain appearance and longevity of the fabric. Our Maintenance & Cleaning Guide can be viewed on our sales page.

To protect both the frame and the canvas we tailor in a foot of Top Gun (heavy duty vinyl-coated canvas) at the bottom of the wall, which gets tucked under the frame so that the wood and canvas never touch the ground.

### CAN YOUR YURTS BE USED YEAR-ROUND?

Yes! To make your yurt a four season shelter and provide complete protection in heavy rain we offer a double roof cover and would recommend using a wood stove and felt panels in the winter months. Rather than use a very heavy weight canvas, which is impractical to move around and harder to pitch, a double skin provides a weather strong four-season shelter and also ensures that one of the canvases stays clean and stain free. The low roof and circular shape of the yurt is easily heated with a small wood stove. We run our yurt building workshops in our 17 ft yurts in -20 conditions and have been very warm. Yurts can be as simple or as modernized as you like depending on the level of luxury you choose. For example, building a platform can make yurt living more comfortable and also allows for additional shortage.

### CAN I LEAVE MY YURT UP ALL THE TIME?

You can leave your yurt up year round as long as your living in it and following our recommended maintenance schedule. General maintenance such as brushing the canvas down weekly to prevent mold growth (mold spores can grow on debris that lands on the

*hand-made coppice wood yurts*

1459 White Rock Rd, RR#1, Wolfville, NS, B4P 2R1 902 670-4556 [info@lfy.ca](mailto:info@lfy.ca) [www.lfy.ca](http://www.lfy.ca)

yurt) and oiling the frame with linseed oil and turpentine twice a year will also help to prevent mold growth, keep the frame strong and looking good. If you are not using the yurt regularly, then you should take it down, and store it properly until you want to use it again. This will prolong the life of the yurt.

### WHICH WOOD STOVES DO YOU RECOMMEND?

We have listed two companies who provide wood stoves, both of which we have and are satisfied with.

Four Dog Wood Stove [www.fourdog.com](http://www.fourdog.com) is a small family business in MN, USA which makes portable lightweight stoves perfect for yurts. You can even get a water jacket and an oven. This stove is not CSA approved.

Jotul Woodstoves [www.jotul.com](http://www.jotul.com) The Jotul 602 is an ideal CSA approved wood stove and would be recommended for more permanent use.

### HOW CAN A WOOD STOVE BE INSTALLED AND USED SAFELY?

We make a wood stove fitting for the chimney on the side of the yurt, or provide you with a second roof hat with a chimney flange, which would be for a central chimney. Using a wood stove in a yurt is not risky provided you follow the safe distances for combustibles regarding your chimney and stove. This means utilizing CSA approved steel insulated chimneys [Excel](#) and non combustible fibre board on your floor and shielding behind the stove. The flange is a high temperature silicone boot that will make a water tight seal around your chimney, riveted and flashed onto our S109 coded Sunforger canvas.

We also provide a non combustible flange with flap cover to allow your insulated chimney to pass through the wall. It is advisable to have your installation checked by a certified chimney and stove installer (WET installer). A high temperature silicone flange is riveted into our S109 coded Sunforger canvas.

### HOW DO YOU RECOMMEND INSULATING THE YURTS?

We provide locally made felt panels which are the traditional felt covering of yurts in Central Asia. Each panel is hemmed with jute edging. Extremely durable and hardwearing they provide an natural, breathable insulation. The felt panels are enclosed by the cotton canvas to protect it from the weather. We can also recommend layering up wool blankets between the trellis and the canvas. This will make a natural, breathable insulation that is easy to acquire from second hand shops.

### HOW DO YOUR YURTS PERFORM IN STORMS

Our 17 & 20ft yurts have been up in very strong winds (80 km winds) and have performed very well. If a storm is coming the addition of tying down the wheel and supporting the bottom of the wall from the inside of the yurt will ensure the yurt keeps its shape to enhance aerodynamic performance. However, the yurt is a temporary structure,

*hand-made coppice wood yurts*

1459 White Rock Rd, RR#1, Wolfville, NS, B4P 2R1 902 670-4556 [info@lfy.ca](mailto:info@lfy.ca) [www.lfy.ca](http://www.lfy.ca)

and if you have prior warning of a hurricane, it would be prudent to take it down. We would never recommend taking a yurt down during a storm or in high winds. We do offer extra tie down kits that can easily be fitted onto your constructed yurt. For all clients in doubt of what to do in this situation, please contact us!

### WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO COOL THE YURT?

There are a variety of ways to cool the yurt. The skylight allows fresh air to be pulled into the yurt to aid in natural convection cooling.

The skylight is an eight pointed star, made of Sunbrella fabric which is a heavy duty fade resistant material with a super clear UV resistant plastic window in the middle. The "legs" of the star attach to tie down ropes which are anchored both to the yurt and ground. You can easily take it off and on from ground level and there are no mechanical parts or fastenings that could break. The dome skylight is supported within the steam bent ash wheel by a lattice of hardwood poles.

The simple and traditional ventilation technique is to fold back the roof cover in half on the windward side. Windows can also provide added ventilation and viewing. Having two windows opposite will provide a nice cross breeze.

### DO YOU PROVIDE FLOORING?

The flooring we offer is a natural product which is made from coconut husk fibres. It is densely woven with a herringbone weave. It is naturally anti-bacterial and is extremely hardwearing. The flooring is tailored to fit to your yurt and edged with jute trim. Dirt and dust is easily removed by taking the flooring out periodically and banging with a broom, alternatively you can brush out debris with a long bristled brush. This flooring is really great if you are planning to place the yurt on ground level. The flooring price includes a tailored tarp to put underneath. The tarp acts as a vapour barrier which stops moisture and humidity coming up from the ground.

### DO YOU PROVIDE WOODEN FLOORING?

No, however a wooden platform is a good idea to keep your yurt high and dry. Which will greatly benefit the overall health of your yurt. We have a small variety of tried and tested deck plans including portable decks in sections.

When it comes to floor insulation nothing is better than a wool rug. View the traditional floor rug of the Kyrgyz yurt and buy a shyrdak available through us from fair trade women's cooperative in Kyrgyzstan.

A platform also allows for additional storage and the opportunity to install fixtures such as electricity. You can view our layout plans and decking specifications on our sales page.

### HOW CAN I PREVENT LITTLE CRITTERS FROM COMING INSIDE MY YURT?

*hand-made coppice wood yurts*

1459 White Rock Rd, RR#1, Wolfville, NS, B4P 2R1 902 670-4556 [info@lfy.ca](mailto:info@lfy.ca) [www.lfy.ca](http://www.lfy.ca)

As long as you are living in your yurt you shouldn't have a problem with rodents, however you will want to keep all of your perishables in a mouse-proof container. You can also seal the plastic skirt (at the bottom of the canvas walls) to a deck, to achieve a barrier against rodents.

### HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO PUT UP A LITTLE FOOT YURT?

A 12ft yurt takes about 30 minutes to erect. A 17ft yurt takes an hour and a half, a 20ft yurt takes two hours and a 28ft yurt takes 6-7 hours to erect. Our yurts are very easy to erect and dismantle. The modern style yurts tend to be trickier to assemble simply because they are designed with more fixtures and fittings, which can be complicated. Our yurts however are traditional in design making the set up intuitive, easy and fun! We have an instructional video for clients that cannot receive our full day training because of distances.

### WHAT KIND OF SECURITY DOES A YURT OFFER?

You can add a solid wood door to your purchase with a high quality residential lockset carrying a lifetime warranty. The yurt also has a continuous lattice wall that spans from one side of the door frame to the other, even through the windows. This means the only way to enter is through the doorway.

### WHO MAKES YOUR DOORS?

Troy Wood of [Wooden Window & Door Company](#) makes our doors. If you would like carvings in any of the panels, Alex Cole of Little Foot Yurts can do so.

### CAN ELECTRICITY BE INSTALLED?

Electrical wiring in a yurt is typically done through the floor. Outlets can be mounted flush in the floor of the yurt or on short support posts around the perimeter of the wall. We recommend having a local professional install the electrical wiring. If electrical service is not available at your site you might consider photovoltaic (solar) systems or propane systems (lights, refrigeration, heating, cook stoves, etc).

### HOW DO I ADD LIGHTING?

Virtually any type of lighting can be used in a Little Foot Yurt. Customers have installed overhead lights to the centre ring, used floor or table lamps and LED tube lighting.

### DO YOU NEED A PERMIT TO USE A YURT?

Most of the specifications of the Canadian building codes apply to permanent structures. If you wish to use a yurt in one location permanently then you may have to acquire permits and follow code. The yurt is designed as a nomadic shelter and is by nature temporary. We urge all of our clients to think of our yurts in this way.

*hand-made coppice wood yurts*

1459 White Rock Rd, RR#1, Wolfville, NS, B4P 2R1 902 670-4556 [info@lfy.ca](mailto:info@lfy.ca) [www.lfy.ca](http://www.lfy.ca)

By putting the yurt on a deck for example is a excellent way to get all year round use out of your yurt, but in fact only the deck has been permanently installed on that location. In high profile areas you may be required to get a building permit for a deck and build it to code.

Variables such as the size and use of the yurt as well as the site can help determine if the yurt will require a permit and what type of permit may be needed. In some cases the yurt has been considered a temporary structure, while in others it has been considered a permanent or semi-permanent structure. It really depends how you will use it.

The yurt is often classified as an auxiliary building, studio or recreational structure, not as a single-family dwelling. For specific information on building codes in your area you should contact your local building official. In Nova Scotia a permit is not required for an accessory building less than 215 sq ft (a 17ft yurt would be a maximum size to stay within this boundary.)

In certain circumstances if the yurt is used for public access permits are required and the yurt has to adhere to fire code for its coverings. Little Foot Yurt covers comply to all Canadian Fire Codes (S109).

### CAN I USE MY YURT FOR PUBLIC ACCESS EVENTS?

Yes, our canvas is tested to CPAI 84 and S109 ULC for fire retardency (Canadian standard for public access event spaces). If you use a yurt for a public access space (for yurt rentals) you must follow the codes and regulations for that purpose, including exit signage, back up lighting, and fire coded materials. Our commercial sized yurts (24 ft and bigger) have 6 and half foot high walls and have a 7 ft high, 4 ft wide door, which is wheelchair accessible, and is built to comply with public access regulations.

### DO YOU HAVE YURTS IN STOCK AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE?

Yes. We build yurts from autumn to spring each year. Depending on when you place your order most smaller yurts are ready for the following spring. Larger commercial yurts may require more notice to allow for the time to process and dry the coppice wood. Placing a deposit down to secure your order is the only way to secure our next consecutive yurt build.

All of our yurts that will be built for spring each year, must have the deposit paid and be ordered before the end of October. This is because of the cyclical nature of our harvesting techniques; the forestry component of our work (which occurs in the winter) precedes each build.

### DO YOU OFFER LONG TERM RENTALS?

We provide yurt rentals for up to 3 weeks. Beyond that it must be a second consecutive rental allowing us to come and service the yurt before the next rental starts. Most yurts

*hand-made coppice wood yurts*

1459 White Rock Rd, RR#1, Wolfville, NS, B4P 2R1 902 670-4556 [info@lfy.ca](mailto:info@lfy.ca) [www.lfy.ca](http://www.lfy.ca)

sizes for sale are ready in the spring each year. We have 12ft yurts that can be ready within one month turn around.

### WHEN DO YOU RUN YOUR WORKSHOPS AND DO YOU OFFER WORKSHOPS OFF SITE?

Our yurt building workshops occur every January, usually the last two weekends. We do receive requests to run our residential workshops off site, however due to the infrastructure involved in preparing and running our workshops we prefer to run them on our property. It would be hard to provide the same quality and infrastructure off site.

For community groups we generally recommend identifying one or two people to attend a workshop and then use the skills to orientate, share and train the greater community.

We do not run workshops in the spring and summer months as we are busy in spring finishing off our builds and through out the summer we are renting out our commercial sized yurts for weddings, festivals and community events.

*hand-made coppice wood yurts*

1459 White Rock Rd, RR#1, Wolfville, NS, B4P 2R1 902 670-4556

[info@lfy.ca](mailto:info@lfy.ca)

[www.lfy.ca](http://www.lfy.ca)

