



# Propane

**Propane** is the gas we use to fuel our backyard grills. It is a lot like natural gas—you cannot see it, smell it, or taste it, but you can burn it to produce heat energy.

Propane has been around for millions of years, but no one knew it. It is buried underground in **sedimentary rocks** with natural gas and petroleum.

Propane wasn't discovered until 1912. The scientists knew they had found a good, new energy source. One year later, people were using it to heat their homes.

## Propane is a Fossil Fuel

Propane is a **fossil fuel**. It was formed millions of years ago, long before the dinosaurs. Like oil and natural gas, it was formed from tiny sea animals and plants.

The plants got their energy from the sun. This is the energy in propane. Propane's energy came from the sun.

Propane is mixed with natural gas and petroleum when it comes from the ground. It is separated out at natural gas processing plants and oil refineries.

## Propane is Nonrenewable

The propane we burn today was made a long time ago. It took millions of years to form. We can't make more propane in a short time. It is a **nonrenewable** source of energy.

We get propane from petroleum and natural gas. Our supply of propane depends on our supply of these other fossil fuels.



## Propane is Portable

When propane comes out of the ground, it is a gas. But when it is put under pressure, it becomes a liquid. A lot more liquid can be put into a tank than gas. A tank of propane gas might last a week. The same sized tank of liquid propane would last five years!

Liquid propane is easy to move from place to place in tanks. It is portable—that means easy to move. We use small tanks of propane for our barbecue grills. One tank can last all summer.



A propane grill.

## We Use Propane Every Day

About 40 percent of the farms in the United States use propane to dry crops, run tractors, and heat barns. Businesses use propane for heating and cooking. Most vehicles that we drive inside buildings use propane for fuel. It is a clean burning fuel.

Some cars and buses use propane for fuel. It is a very clean fuel. It doesn't pollute the air like gasoline. Engines must be changed to use propane though, and that is expensive. There aren't many propane filling stations either.

Some people in the country don't have natural gas pipelines near their homes. They use propane instead. They put big propane tanks outside their houses. Small trucks bring the propane right to their houses.



This forklift is fueled by propane.



Propane is stored in a large tank. It is used to provide energy for heating, cooking, and drying clothes.