



Collecting wild plants without the landowners written permission is prohibited by state law (RIGL 2-15-8). This includes plants commonly collected to create decorative floral arrangements, such as mountain laurel and princess pine, as well as other native plants. This holds true on public land where permission to collect must be obtained from the managing agency.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Balsam Fir Tip Gathering. Christmas Wreath Notes. Bulletin #7011. Mark Cercon and William D. Lilley. University of Maine Cooperative Extension 1995.

Growing a Continuous Supply of Balsam Fir Wreath Brush. Fact Sheet #7089. William D. Lilley and Mark A. McCollough. University of Maine Cooperative Extension. 1991



OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Issues that may affect the harvest of forest greens are collection of threatened or endangered plants and obtaining landowner permission before collection. Make positive identification of any plant you intend to collect. Some native plants are threatened due to over-collection or destruction of their habitat and are protected by State and Federal law. The Rhode Island Natural Heritage Program, (401) 222-2776, maintains a database of rare and endangered plants in Rhode Island as well as locations where they are known to occur. For information on the biology and habitat of unique native plants contact the Rhode Island Wild Plant Society at (401) 783-5895.

Income Opportunities in Special Forest Products. Self Help Suggestions for Rural Entrepreneurs. USDA Bulletin 666. Thomas, Margaret G. and David. R. Schumann. May 1993.

Making Balsam Fir Wreaths. Bulletin# 7012. Mark Cercon and William D. Lilley. University of Maine Cooperative Extension 1995.

Making Wreaths for Profit. Fact Sheet # 7013. Jim Philp. University of Maine Cooperative Extension. 1998.

Marketing Maine Christmas Wreaths. James C. McConnan, Jr. and William D. Lilley. Bulletin # 3019 University of Maine Cooperative Extension. 1993.

Special Forest Products: A Guide to Floral Greens. EB 1059. Washington State Cooperative Extension. 1990.

RI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT & THE RURAL LANDS COALITION SUBCOMMITTEE PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE:

Rhode Island DEM:
Office of Strategic Planning & Policy
Division of Forest Environment
Division of Agriculture

Rhode Island Forest Conservators Organization
Southern New England Forest Consortium
USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

RI DEM, Division of Forest Environment
(401) 637-3367 or visit our website at:
www.state.ri.us/dem/forprod/forstprd.htm

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
(401) 828-1300

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*How can I generate income
on my forestland?*



DECORATIVE FLORAL GREENS

as a sustainable
land-based business

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with the Rhode Island Rural Lands Coalition

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OVERVIEW

In Rhode Island, management for traditional forest products, like timber and firewood, can be difficult to justify on an economic basis alone due to the small size of most parcels of land and the long term nature of management for wood products.

Throughout the United States, management for



forest grown floral products has gained increased attention as harvests of traditional forest products have declined. Alternative forest based businesses, such as selling forest grown plants for floral greens, is compatible with other forest uses and can be done on a sustainable basis. It has the

potential to generate supplemental income, at least enough to help offset property taxes, easing the financial burden of land ownership and encouraging landowners to retain and manage tracts of forestland. This publication provides an overview of wild plants harvested for decorative purposes, including the types of plant materials used, harvest methods and markets.

INTRODUCTION

Floral greens include plant products used for decorative applications. The most commonly harvested form of greenery is boughs from evergreen trees used to make wreaths, garland, and swags during the Christmas season.

Other uses include decorative material for floral arrangements, centerpieces, and displays. Some

commonly harvested forest grown floral products in Rhode Island include holly, mountain laurel, and princess pine. Native evergreens, like white pine and hemlock, and some introduced species typically grown for Christmas trees (like grand fir or noble fir) can be used for boughs. Other plants common-



ly used include moss, ferns, flowers, as well as cones. A list of plants and plant parts typically used is shown in the table at right.

Vines, from plants such as grape, bittersweet, and honeysuckle are used to make wreaths and baskets. Small branches, twigs, and bark from trees like yellow and paper birch, sassafras, dogwood, and eastern red cedar can be used to accent arrangements.

MARKETS

Markets for floral greens include wholesale floral supply stores or local florists and craft stores. Typically, wholesalers purchase larger quantities of a wide range of materials but pay less. There are three wholesalers in the Rhode Island Area (see table at bottom far right). Each wholesaler has different size requirements, quality specifications, and payment terms which should be established prior to the harvest.

Retail outlets, like florists and garden centers, pay more for material but generally purchase only small volumes at one time. Some local florists do

COMMONLY HARVESTED FLORAL PRODUCTS

Cedar boughs
 Pine boughs
 Spruce boughs
 Hemlock boughs
 Mountain laurel
 Holly
 Alder branches
 Birch branches
 Ironwood branches
 Ferns
 Dogwood
 Grape vines
 Bittersweet vines
 Sumac
 Cattails
 Club moss
 White birch bark
 Winterberry
 Pussy willow
 Pine cones
 Arborvitae

not use locally grown plant products in their displays and specifications vary considerably between those that do. It's best to contact potential buyers to determine what they use and may be willing to purchase before plants are harvested.

The price paid for floral greens is determined by differences in quality, which is usually related to the species of plant, the conditions it grew under, how it was harvested, as well as handling after harvest. Freshness is critical, the plants usually won't store for more than two or three days unless refrigerated.

An alternative method of marketing native floral greens is to collect the material and create decorative arrangements, such as wreaths and baskets, that can then be sold to craft stores or directly to retail customers. This method yields a higher profit than selling raw materials but requires a talent for floral design as well as a significant time investment.

WHOLESALE FLORAL SUPPLY COMPANIES



- Bay State & Johnson
 395 Promenade Street
 Providence, RI 02908
- R.J. Carbone Co.
 1 Goddard Drive
 Cranston, RI 02910
- Fall River Florist Supply Company
 119 Cove Street
 Fall River, MA 02720