

plants that are used for decorative purposes. Foliage can be harvested on a sustainable basis every two to three years. Although land is not usually managed solely for the purpose of producing floral greens, it can be achieved in conjunction with other objectives, like thinning a pine forest to increase tree growth.

Florist shops and local specialty shops are the most promising markets for forest grown floral greens. Market prices vary with plant species and product quality.

**RECREATION** includes leasing land for hunting and fishing, as well as user fees for other outdoor activities like cross-country skiing, horseback riding, hiking or mountain biking. As public recreation areas



become more crowded, the use of private land is becoming more enticing to people seeking solitude and a "back to nature" experience.

Charging fees for using private land is not a

new concept. There are well developed markets for hunting leases in the southern U.S. Ski areas in northern New England have developed into four season recreational areas featuring a variety of activities.

The issue of liability makes landowners reluctant to grant access to their property for recreation. Liability insurance is a necessity for any commercial enterprise. This may be available as a rider on your homeowners policy. A lease or another form of written agreement is advisable to spell out the terms of using the property.

The economic viability of any recreational enterprise depends on the type of land and its location, as well as the scope of services offered. Hunting requires large acreage and high quality habitat for wildlife. Fishing requires access to ponds or streams. A well developed trail system is essential for dispersed recreation, such as hiking, cross-country skiing, trail

biking or horseback riding. An option for landowners with small acreage could be to work cooperatively in order to create larger acreage with more extensive trail system.



**SPECIALTY WOOD PRODUCTS** includes trees, or parts of trees, that are not usually considered valuable as forest products. This could be due to their species, their form, or the fact that the volume is too small for economically viable harvesting operations. However, these raw materials can be turned into valuable products by skilled artisans! The product list is lengthy and quite diverse, but all crafts are unique. Items like furniture, carvings, musical instruments, bowls, baskets, table tops, walking sticks, wooden bats and other crafts are among the many products.

There are two strategies for forestland owners; one is to actually manufacture specialty wood products, the other is to sell wood or wood "debris" from the land to artists or craftsman who will use it as raw material.



Profitability of a specialty wood products business varies with the target market (i.e. functional furnishings or artistic crafts), product quality, as well as supply and demand.

Selling raw material or finished specialty wood products varies with the quality and demand for the product you're selling.

*Want to know more?*

**FOREST BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES  
publications available from RIDEM**

Cultivated Mushrooms • Wild Mushrooms  
Witch Hazel • Maple Syrup  
Recreation • Hunting Leases  
Specialty Wood Products • Floral Greens

*Project funding provided through a grant from the USDA Forest Service—Rural Development Through Forestry Program.*

**OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

*Natural Resources Income Opportunities for Private Lands Conference. University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service. April 1998.*

*Income Opportunities in Special Forest Products: Self-Help Suggestions for Rural Entrepreneurs. USDA Forest Service. Agriculture Information Bulletin 666. May 1993.*

*Proceedings from the Conference on: Income Opportunities for the Private Landowner through Management of Natural Resources and Recreational Access. West Virginia University Extension Service. R.D. No. 740. 1990.*

*Forest Farming: An Agroforestry Practice. Agroforestry Notes (AF Note-7). USDA Forest Service & USDA-NRCS. November 1997.*

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*How can I generate income  
on my forestland?*



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◀ FLORAL GREENERY ▶  
◀ RECREATION ▶  
◀ SPECIALTY WOOD PRODUCTS ▶

Sponsored by Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, in cooperation with the Rhode Island Rural Lands Coalition  
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Programs and activities are available to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, or national origin.





## FOREST BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

*The goal of this project is to preserve healthy and sustainable forests by encouraging landowners to adopt innovative forest based business activities that meet changing landowner and community needs*

Management for traditional wood-based forest products is difficult in Rhode Island because of small parcel size (81 percent of the land is held in parcels less than ten acres in size) and rapidly changing markets for forest products.

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, in conjunction with the Rural Lands Coalition, is assessing alternative forest uses to replace or augment traditional forest products and to foster natural resource based economic development in rural areas that is consistent with rural character and lifestyle.

This publication is the first in a series, encouraging landowners to manage for a variety of forest resources in a sustainable manner by providing an overview of forest based business opportunities. Areas of focus include, but are not limited to:

- Edible and medicinal products • Recreation
- Specialty Wood Products • Floral products

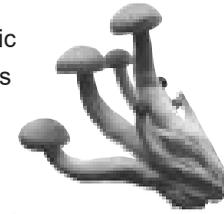
**MAPLE SYRUP** has been used as a sweetener for generations. Only maple trees found in North America, such as sugar maple, black maple or red maple, have suitable sugar content to create maple syrup. Early settlers learned from Native Americans that sap from these trees could be processed into syrup.



Large trees (over 10 inches diameter) with large, well formed crowns may be tapped during February and March to harvest the sap. Most of the syrup produced is made in northern New England by tapping sugar maple trees. Red maple—the Rhode Island state tree — can also be used, although the sugar content is lower and the tapping season shorter than sugar maple. Making maple syrup involves tapping trees, collecting the sap and processing it into syrup by evaporating off the water.

Although there are a multitude of sweeteners available, maple syrup is a staple of Americans' diets. Maple syrup can be sold by marketing directly to consumers (through roadside stands, farmers markets and mail order) or selling wholesale to supermarkets and restaurants. Another option for busy landowners with concentrations of large maple trees is to lease the taps to a person who processes and sells the syrup.

**MUSHROOMS** are formed by fungi that live on decaying organic matter. The cool, moist conditions in the forest are ideal for the fungi to grow and produce fruit, forming mushrooms. Some types of mushrooms only grow under a forest canopy in close association with tree roots. Collecting wild mushrooms is a traditional family activity in many cultures. The most common wild gathered mushrooms are Chanterelle, bolete and morels. The most important steps when gathering wild mushrooms are to either go with someone who is experienced in identifying mushrooms and/or consult reliable publications. Some varieties of mushrooms, like shiitake and oyster, can be cultivated. Basic steps for growing these



mushrooms include obtaining spawn, preparing the logs, introducing the spawn to the logs, and keeping the logs cool and moist until the fungi colonize the log to form mushrooms.

**WITCH HAZEL** is a key component in many topical ointments. The witch hazel is a small tree, rarely over 20 feet tall. It tolerates shade, but is slow growing, usually in the understory of hardwood forests on fertile, moist soils.



*For information on specific forest business opportunities contact RIDEM, Division of Forest Environment.*

The twigs and bark from the witch hazel are used to produce distillate. Witch hazel plants are harvested in late fall and early winter, then chipped and boiled. The steam produced from this boiling process goes through a separator to a condenser, where it becomes astringent.

American Distilling in East Hampton, Connecticut produces virtually the entire world supply of witch hazel extract. Traditionally, witch hazel has been harvested from woodlots in Connecticut, Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts. Because of forest fragmentation, the company has been forced to expand its search for raw material into western Massachusetts and southern Vermont. There are several contractors who purchase and harvest raw witch hazel from local forests to chip and transport to Connecticut for processing.

**FLORAL GREENERY** has a rapidly expanding market. There are a variety of forest grown floral products that are used for

decorative arrangements such as wreaths, backdrops for floral arrangements and bouquets. Conifer boughs are popular holiday decorations and are mainly made from white pine and balsam fir. Markets boom during the holiday season with the sale of wreaths, garland and swags. Princess pine, holly and mountain laurel are native plants that are

