



Specialty Forest Products

Missouri's forests produce many forest products each year. The forest products industry contributes about four billion dollars each year to the Missouri economy. Most of the products come from traditional forest products, but non-traditional or "specialty forest products" should not be overlooked for a way to earn a few extra dollars.

Traditional forest products are what most people think of when forest products are mentioned. Some of the wood products produced from Missouri's forests are railroad cross-ties, hardwood flooring, furniture lumber, pallet lumber, mulch, wood chips, paper, and dimensional lumber.

Most people do not think about the other items or services that come from our forests. Some of the non-traditional items or services that are produced each year are recreation, wood floral, medicinals and botanicals, woody based food products, handicrafts, and specialty woods.

Recreation

Each year Missourians spend countless numbers of hours in the forest doing various activities. Some of the activities are hiking, hunting, bird watching, biking, riding horses, and riding ATVs.

Hunting is an activity that many people do each year with their family. Most people list hunting as one of the top reasons for owning multiple acres. Each spring and fall families and friends head to the woods in hopes of harvesting a whitetail deer or turkey. Some of my best memories with my children were made in the deer woods.

Wood Floral

Have you ever been in a gift shop and noticed a flower arrangement with grape vines and pine cones? If you have noticed these items, you saw a forest product that could have come from someone's woodlot next to yours. Wild grape vines are harvested and sold to florists to make flower arrangements. Pine cones can be picked up on your land and also possibly sold to the florist. Some plant species have colorful or unusually shaped stems, flowers, fruit or leaves which are sometimes collected for floral arrangements.

Medicinals and Botanicals

Many people take herbal products for one reason or another. Many kinds of medicinals and botanicals are made from nearly all parts of trees, shrubs or herbaceous plants, including wood, bark, leaves, roots, flowers, nuts, sap and pollen. Ginseng is a plant that is highly treasured in the Asian market. The roots of Golden Seal are supposed to help with stomach problems. Wild ginger is used for spices in cooking.

Woody Based Food Products

Many foods are made from the fruit from trees, shrubs, and woody vines. I love my black-berry cobbler made from black-berries. Walnut and pecan kernels make wonderful

tasting cookies, pies, and ice cream. Many people love the fruit of the Paw-paw tree and the hazel nuts of the hazel nut shrub. Some folks make pies and jellies out of wild blue-berries, huckleberry, and wild plum.

Each year people spend countless hours searching for mushrooms. The Morel mushroom is truly a treat to most folks. I know several people that have their 'spot' where they find more mushrooms than everyone else. I know there is more to mushroom hunting than just finding the mushroom. I find that lots of people are finding this to be a good excuse to find time to be in the woods for recreation.

Some of the above fruits and nuts can be sold into a niche market. My aunt use to sell countless gallons of back-berries to the folks in town. A little advertisement about having some extra fruit or berries could lead to some potential income.

Handicrafts and Specialty Woods

There are many different items made out of wood products that are not found regularly in the stores. Walking canes can be made out of sassafras and many other woods as well. Baskets are usually made out of reeds. Rustic furniture can be made out of lumber from most any tree species.

Odd portions of a tree can make lumber that is treasured by woodworkers. Burls on trees have very unique patterns when sawed into lumber. Also, when a tree forks, the crotch wood can be beautiful. Some of the products I have seen made are gun stocks, tables, cigar boxes, and jewelry boxes.

Some trees that seem worthless to most people are a treasure to others. The wood of an Osage orange tree can be used to make traditional archery equipment, wildlife calls and fence post. Some maple trees have wood grain patterns (bird's eye and curly grain) that are used in construction of musical instruments. Sassafras wood is used for boat paddles and carving.

As you have read above, our forests in Missouri produce many valuable products. Whether you are walking in the woods, viewing wildlife, or using a piece of fine wood to make something, you are receiving a product from our Missouri forest.

Remember to always ask for permission before entering someone else's property to harvest any type of forest products. Also be sure to check state regulations/wildlife code before harvesting plants anywhere in Missouri.

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