

# Marketing of Specialty Forest Products in the Southeast: Opportunities for Research, Education and Outreach<sup>1</sup>

A. L. Hammett<sup>2</sup> , Jim Chamberlain<sup>3</sup>

---

The specialty forest products sector in the Southeast is growing rapidly - perhaps faster than in other sections of the country. In 1993, the state of Virginia exported almost 10 percent of the national total of wild harvested ginseng. On a yearly basis, the value of the specialty forest products extracted from Virginia's forests has been estimated at \$35 million. The Southeast has a long history of producing several important commodities including naval stores, pine straw, Spanish moss, and Saw Palmetto. New products and markets have proliferated putting further pressure on our natural resources. We need to explore opportunities for the sustainable management of natural resources, as well as developing new production systems.

To develop workable strategies for increasing production and marketing of specialty forest products, we have begun to analyze marketing systems for these products in Southwest Virginia. Describing marketing chains, interpreting data on important marketing elements, and comparing results within and between different groups of products will help us develop ways to collect and

use information throughout the region. Product categories selected as emphases for this study are NTFP crafts (grapevine wreaths, baskets, furniture, and birdhouses), medicinal and herbal NTFPs, specialty wood products (musical instruments), and edible forest products. All these products lend themselves to further exploring the productive systems highlighted in this conference.

The next step is to develop appropriate venues for educating landowners, collectors, and policy makers about the productive possibilities for specialty forest products. We have conducted focus group meetings to identify production and conservation concerns, and plan to conduct similar meetings throughout the region to ensure that the needs of all stakeholders are represented. Four specialty forest products factsheets that document production possibilities and conservation concerns are being tested to see if they are effective education and extension tools. Within the next year a regional conference will focus on the utilization and marketing of these products.

---

<sup>1</sup>Poster abstract presented at the North American Conference On Enterprise Development Through Agroforestry: Farming the Agroforest for Specialty Products (Minneapolis, MN, October 4-7, 1998)

<sup>2</sup>Center for Forest Products Marketing and Management Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0323

<sup>3</sup>Center for Forest Products Marketing and Management Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0323

*Proceedings of the*

**North American Conference on Enterprise  
Development Through Agroforestry:**

***Farming the Agroforest for Specialty Products***

October 4-7, 1998  
Double Tree Park Place Hotel  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

**Scott J. Josiah, Editor**

**Production Coordination:** Susan Vosler, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Erik Streed, Center for Integrated Natural Resources and Agricultural Management, University of Minnesota

**Layout:** Susan Vosler, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

**Publisher:** Center for Integrated Natural Resources and Agricultural Management,  
University of Minnesota, 1530 Cleveland Ave. N., 115 Green Hall, St. Paul, MN  
55108. 612-624-4299

**December 1999**

Printed in the United States of America

*Published by:*

University of Minnesota  
Center for Integrated Natural Resources & Agricultural Management  
St. Paul, Minnesota

and

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
School of Natural Resource Sciences  
Lincoln, NE 68583-0814

For copies of these proceedings contact Erik Streed or Ken Brooks, 1530 Cleveland Ave N., 115 Green Hall, St. Paul, MN 55108. 612-624-4299 or 612-624-2774

The sponsoring agencies' programs are open to all citizens without regard to race, color, religion, age, national origin, sex or disability.