

Stewardship Notes

Indiana Division of Forestry



Special Forest Products

Although less prominent than traditional forest products like lumber, veneer, and firewood, special forest products have a role in Indiana's forest-based economy. Special forest products can provide a source of supplemental income for rural entrepreneurs. They also can provide an enjoyable woodland hobby for forest landowners.

Most special forest products operations employ one or two people or more if on a part-time basis. Prior to starting a business focused on special forest products, the entrepreneur needs to do a feasibility study. This study should include four components: personnel, market, budget, and project feasibility.

At the personal level, what goals do you have for marketing your product? What are the opportunity costs of embarking on this? What level of supplemental income do you need? You need to know the market: what you will sell; who will buy it; and when you will harvest, process, and sell the product. You need to prepare a budget for this business venture. A budget should include fixed and variable costs, as well as expected gross and net revenue. Finally, what is the project's resource feasibility? You need to know the location of harvest sites, and whether these sites are on public or private land. Adhering to federal, state, and local product harvesting and processing regulations will ensure resource sustainability. Listed below are some examples of the more common special forest products in Indiana.

Maple Syrup

Sap collected in late winter and early spring from the sugar (hard) maple is boiled to produce syrup. It takes 30-40 gallons of sap to produce one gallon of syrup. A good source of information is:

North American Maple Syrup Council
W10010 Givens Rd.
Hortonville, WI 54944