

Value Added Processing/Marketing of Forest Based Florals: Workshop Notes (Taken by Mel Baughman)¹

Don and Cherie Mitchell²

Overview of Company

The Mitchells outlined the process of their floral company, identifying the products, stressing the importance of a business plan, and acquiring financing for the operation.

- Raise cut flowers and herbs on 11 acres for the florals (not medicinal) markets
- Harvest wild grown florals (e.g., Salal, which is the premier floral green in the US and European florals industry)
- Preserve floral greens by sun bleaching or coloring with dye, and treating with glycerine to maintain flexibility. Work with Salal, Hydranga, Port Orford Cedar, Chinkapin. Port Oxford Cedar preserves very well with Glycerine.

Product line has been developed as a response to current demands, and through their own creations and introductions to the florals industry. Salal has

the greatest demand. Coyotebush is a floral green that they have developed and are among the sole suppliers.

Sell bulk shipments or individual cellophane bunches of floral greens that can be sold retail out of the box. Market a designer pack targeted at smaller floral shops, which include different color bunches of salal, or a sampler or mixed box of greenery. Sell a range of floral designs (wreaths, sprays etc.) using preserved florals. Diversity is part of their market strategy. The strategy itself has evolved over time, starting with selling wreaths at Christmas, then through catalogs, then developed formal business plans and “market strategizing”.

Internet marketing will be the wave of the future, despite the thinking that florists tend to be conservative and old fashioned, and not very technologically oriented.

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

²Flora Pacifica, Box 1104, Oceanview Dr., Brookings, OK 97415