

Profitable Crops for Unlikely Places: Producing Handicraft and Floral Products in Riparian Agroforestry Buffer Zones¹

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Riparian plantings and vegetative filterstrips are being encouraged to reduce soil erosion and improve water quality by reducing nutrient and chemical runoff. Although environmental effects of these plantings are well established, the possibility of obtaining supplementary income from them during the winter months would encourage greater use of this powerful environmental tool. We have been investigating the feasibility of incorporating rows of ornamental woody shrubs, the stems of which can be harvested to provide

ornamental cut branches for incorporation in floral arrangements, wreath and ornamental baskets. Plants have been selected for tolerance to wet conditions and desirable traits such as stem color, growth habit, early spring flowers and persistent fruit in winter. Successful production strategies with potential returns of up to \$5000/acre have been demonstrated. Examples of appropriate plants, production strategies and market potential will be presented.

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