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Utilization Opportunities for Maritime Maple

Red maple or Maritime maple (*Acer rubrum* L.) is one of the commonest and most generally distributed trees of eastern North America (Sargent, 1965). Lees (1978) reports that it is a significant and increasing component of Maritime mixedwood. In New Brunswick, red maple represents 23 to 28%¹ of the total merchantable hardwood volume.

Woodland managers and secondary wood products manufactures in the Maritimes have held the view that Maritime maple is a low-value species primarily suitable for pulpwood and fuel wood. The proponents of this study felt that this view was inconsistent with the potential of the species to contribute to the value-added finished wood products market.

The study was designed to demonstrate that Maritime maple produced on New Brunswick woodlots can be used in the manufacture of high-value fine furniture. To facilitate this demonstration, the principal investigator (U.N.B. Wood Science and Technology Center) in cooperation with the Canadian Forest Service developed a network of critical agencies. This interdisciplinary network included:

- 1) YSC Woodlot Owners Co-Op
- 2) N.B. Association of Registered Interior Designers
- 3) Interior Designers of Canada
- 4) Maritime Forest Ranger School
- 5) U.N.B. Wood Science & Technology Center
- 6) Hugh John Flemming Forestry Centre

¹New Brunswick Forest Inventory (1986) Report, Timber Management Branch DNRE.

- 7) Architect's Association of N.B.
- 8) N.B. Dept. Economic Development and Tourism
- 9) Industry Science and Technology Canada
- 10) Local wood products manufactures
- 11) Canadian Forest Service

To enhance the image of Maritime maple, it was necessary to demonstrate its potential to all sectors from primary production to the consumer. To facilitate this goal, members of the N.B Association of Registered Interior Designers were invited to participate in a competition to develop thought-provoking designs for furniture or accessories using Maritime maple as the principal wood. A panel of judges selected five winning designs (Spinal cord chair, Conference table, Children's furniture, Console table, Door skins) from the submissions of the 21-member association.

Maritime maple logs from a local woodlot were sawn and kiln-dried at the Maritime Forest Ranger School training sawmill. The lumber and some local red maple plywood was made and given to five local secondary wood products manufactures who agreed to manufacture the winning designs on a cost recovery basis.

The furniture and accessories manufactured in this project were unveiled in a presentation at Sylvicon '93. The products were then displayed at several trade shows and conferences throughout eastern Canada.

Additional information and a complete report on utilization opportunities for Maritime maple can be obtained from the Canadian Forest Service at P.O. Box 4000 Fredericton N.B. E3B 5P7.

Robert West
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Literature Cited:

Sargent, C.S. 1965. Manual of the Trees of North America. Dover Pub. N.Y.

Lees, J.C. 1978. Hardwood Silviculture and Management: an Interpretive Literature Review for the Maritime Provinces. CFS-M, Fred. N.B. M-X-93