



# Hoosier National Forest

## Highlights



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Issue 59

May 14, 2012

### Special Forest Products from the Hoosier National Forest



By Jackie Contreras, Special Uses Program

The Hoosier National Forest has over 200,000 acres in 9 counties and one of our most frequent questions regard taking items off of the National Forest for personal use. The term “forest product” applies to Forest resources that are not associated with timber sale contracts. A forest produces a variety of products which people can harvest, collect and use.

Some of the items that may be collected on the Hoosier National Forest without a permit are fruits, nuts and mushrooms. You are allowed to collect such items as blackberries, raspberries, walnuts, hickory nuts, pecans, rose hips, and pinecones for personal use. A favorite pastime for many forest visitors is the hunt for mushrooms in early spring. Morels are a favorite of most people but can be hard to find. There are three common varieties of morels and one false morel which can sometimes cause illness or death. Small leaf collections are also allowed without a permit.

Rock collecting is a popular pastime of some forest visitors and geodes can be found on the north end of the forest. Small quantities of rocks for personal use may be collected on the Forest, however, there should be no earth disturbance and the rocks cannot be resold. Precious minerals, such as gold and gems, are sometimes located on the Hoosier. Recreational gold panning is allowed without a permit as long as no commercial equipment is used, such as dredges or sluices, and no earth is disturbed. No panning is allowed in the Charles C. Deam Wilderness area. We sometimes receive questions about plant collecting but due to over-harvesting of some plants, for example ginseng and yellowroot, digging plants or roots on the Hoosier is no longer permitted. Some plants such as daffodils and iris, are remnants of old home sites and are part of our historical records and digging of these plants is also prohibited under the Antiquities Act.

Personal use firewood is a forest product that may be gathered on the Hoosier but requires a firewood permit. There are certain restrictions and requirements for obtaining a personal firewood permit. You can contact either the Tell City office at 812-547-7051 or the Bedford office at 812-275-5987 for more information regarding the permitting process.

Items such as old bottles, household items and equipment from old home sites are often found on the Hoosier. These historical items are protected and may not be removed. Use of a metal detector to search for coins or other antiques and historical artifacts is prohibited. However, there is one exception to the rule on the use of metal detectors. They may be used in the beach area of developed recreation sites. You are allowed to sift through the beach sand for modern items without a permit.

Both the Tell City and Bedford offices of the Hoosier National Forest have nature stores provided by the Eastern National Forest Interpretive Association (ENFIA) where you can purchase reference books on edible fruits and berries, rocks and minerals, and poisonous plants.. We have handouts about firewood permits on our website at [www.fs.usda.gov/hoosier](http://www.fs.usda.gov/hoosier). You can also contact either office for specific information about the forest product in which you are interested. Our word to the wise is: WHEN IN DOUBT....LEAVE IT IN THE WOODS!

For more information on special forest products contact Jackie Contreras at 812-547-9228 or [jcontreras@fs.fed.us](mailto:jcontreras@fs.fed.us).

Photos for Article:



Wild raspberries may be picked on the Hoosier.



Picking mushrooms is always a favorite activity on the Hoosier in the spring.



Persimmons ripen in the fall and are a favorite of wildlife and Hoosier visitors alike.