How much can you expect from your tree?

The price of logs, like any commodity, fluctuates with time of year and demand. The main factor affecting price is the grade of the logs in the tree, which is a function of diameter and of the number, nature and size of defects.
Oak and Walnut logs may yield as much as fifty cents and more per board foot if they are high quality.

What about Walnut?

Walnut is probably one of the most overrated trees in the wood industry. People have sold high value walnut veneer trees, but these trees are a rare exception. A tree must have a large diameter, with several logs of the highest grade in order to be highly valuable for timber markets.

Walnut trees in the yard

A walnut that has been grown in the open area such as your yard will have more white sapwood than dark heartwood. The sapwood is not useable for veneer and therefore will not be of interest to veneer wood buyers. The tree growing in your yard may contain foreign objects including nails, clothesline hooks or other metal objects in the trunk. It is common that a comparable size red or white oak, grown in the forest, may be worth more than a walnut yard tree. Fences, clotheslines, power lines and buildings often make the cost of removing the yard tree more expensive than a good quality Walnut tree is worth for timber.

Walnut trees in the woods

There is a much better chance for walnut to be valuable for timber if they are grown in the woods. They grow more slowly, and are not influenced by yard activities that result in foreign objects such as metal or nails present in the trunk.

Often, there are more trees in a wooded situation, making them potentially more attractive for the timber buyer. Also, there are no power lines or buildings that can be damaged when the trees are harvested. The limbs and unused tops can also be left in the woods, reducing costs for a logger.

Marketing and Utilizing your wood

Yard trees usually have little value to commercial mills. However, they can still have good value to hobby woodworkers. To market the wood to the hobbyists, place an advertisement in the local paper.

If you would like to use lumber from your tree yourself, there are sawmills that will do custom sawing for a charge or a percentage of the lumber yield.

For more information in the Twin Cities metro area contact:

Jean Mouelle, Wood Utilization & Marketing Specialist, Region 3, St. Paul at 651-772-7567 or via e-mail at jean.mouelle@dnr.state.mn.us

or

Contact the following DNR Program Foresters for the Twin Cities and surrounding areas:

Alan Olson (Scott, Carver, Dakota, Sherburne & Hennepin Counties) at **952-826-6760**

Art Widerstrom (Anoka, Chisago, Washington, Isanti, Ramsey, & Hennepin Counties) at **651-982-9720 ext. 224**

For more information in Southern Minnesota contact:

Lance Sorensen, Wood Utilization & Marketing Specialist, Region 4, Lake City at 651-345-3216 or via e-mail at lance.sorensen@dnr.state.mn.us

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Is My Yard Tree Worth Money?

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Forestry Division

Minnesota
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Revised February 2006

This handout was developed to help landowners determine if there is wood product value in their yard tree. Not all hardwood trees, including walnut, are valuable. Only yard trees of exceptional quality and significant volume have value. Due to the cost of removal, only quality hardwoods have enough potential value to be considered.

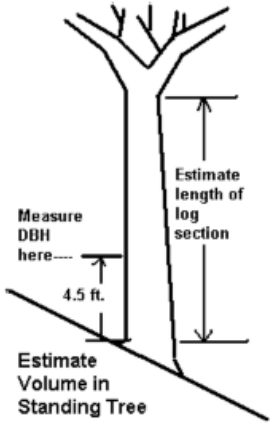
Following are the four most important steps to determine the value of your yard trees and marketability.

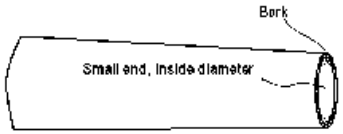
Step 1. Determining the volume

* Logs: A log should be no less than 8 feet 4 inches long. Avoid cutting up the tree trunk. Let the buyer do that. Value of your tree can be lost if **logs** are not **cut appropriately** at the right place and **acceptable length**. If the tree has been cut down and cut up, use the log rule table to determine potential volume. Measure the small end diameter, inside the bark, and the length of the log. Use these measurements to determine board feet. Logs less than the "standard length of log" should use the next lower length (e.g., a 9.11 ft. log will be considered as a 8 ft. log).

- Standing Trees: Estimate the height of the trunk from the base to the first major limb, curve in the trunk, or the point (ocular estimate) where the diameter is less than 8 inches. Measure the DBH (Diameter Breast Height) at 4 ½ feet above the ground (see formula below). To determine log length and small end diameter inside the bark farther up the tree, use ocular estimates. Trees with clear trunks less than 8 feet high or D.B.H. under 18 inches have little value.

$$\text{D.B.H. (inches)} = \frac{\text{Circumference (inches)}}{3}$$





Log Rule (Board Feet - Scribner Decimal C)

Diameter Inside Bark Small end (inches)	**6**	**8**	**10**	**12**	**14**	**16**
			(Contents in Board Feet)			
6	5	5	10	10	10	20
8	10	10	20	20	20	30
10	20	30	30	30	40	60
12	30	40	50	60	70	80
14	40	60	70	90	100	110
16	60	80	100	120	140	160
18	80	110	130	160	190	210
20	110	140	170	210	240	280
22	130	170	210	250	290	330
24	150	210	250	300	350	400

Step 2. Determining the defects

The value of the log decreases as the number, nature and size of defects increases. Look on the log for any knots, seams, cuts, bumps, branches, scars, racks or bark distortions. If there are any of these on the trunk or log, there may be little wood value. The presence of any of these defects on the trunk or log disqualifies the log for veneer.

Step 3. Assessing the presence of foreign objects

Log buyers are very reluctant to buy logs from urban areas because they often contain foreign objects such as nails, clothesline, hooks, fence wire, or cement imbedded in the wood. A single nail can ruin a very expensive saw blade or veneer knife, so buyers are apprehensive of urban trees. Examine the trunk or the log very carefully for any foreign objects. These objects often show up as parts of the object protruding from the log, as lines across or distortions in the bark. The presence of any foreign objects greatly lowers the value of your tree for wood products. A purplish or black spot on the end of the log indicates metal in the tree.

Step 4. Estimating the cost of tree removal

Although there is no easy way to determine the cost of tree removal, there are a few things to look for. If there are any buildings, overhead lines or other permanent structures within the height of the tree, the takedown cost will increase. If these structures are on more than two sides or on the downhill side of the tree, it is likely that the takedown cost will exceed the wood value of the tree. Walnut buyers and loggers are not urban tree removers. They do not have the right equipment and appropriate liability insurance for urban environment, and therefore **will NOT** remove trees near buildings. A Tree Care Service might be your only option.

Step 5. Consulting a professional forester

If a tree passes steps one through four, and has an outstanding volume (over 500 BF) or size (over 20 inch D.B.H.), then consult a professional forester to make an accurate valuation for the tree.