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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A First for Canada's Non-Timber Forest Businesses

Research scientist and author **Dr. Gina Mohammed** has written Canada's first business guide for small businesses in non-timber forest products, also known as NTFPs. These are the foods, medicinals, artisan materials, and other specialty goods from the forest – everything other than conventional timber and pulp & paper.

The Canadian NTFP Business Companion – Ideas, Techniques & Resources for Small Businesses in Non-Timber Forest Products & Services profiles this emerging sector, one Dr. Mohammed considers well-suited to microenterprises and small to medium-sized businesses.

"We tend to think only of maple syrup, Christmas trees, berries, and mushrooms when we think of NTFPs," says Mohammed. "But there are a host of other goods – such as gourmet birch syrup products, pet herbals, wildflower honeys, botanical textiles, natural dyes, plant medicinals, herbal soaps, natural perfumery, landscape materials, music wood, and biofuels."

"In addition, there are many non-timber services as well – in areas such as product quality testing, education & training, plant processing, environmental consulting, and ecotourism. It's truly a multi-dimensional sector."

Across the country, including as far north as the Yukon, entrepreneurs in small businesses are concocting innovative products from Canadian plants.

Mohammed has studied hundreds of NTFP businesses in Canada and internationally for the publication. "The best part of this project has been talking to the entrepreneurs. These enterprising people include families, single moms, retirees, and mid-career professionals doing NTFPs as a sideline or full-time. They're woodlot owners, hobby

farmers, owners of existing businesses, urbanites, and suburb dwellers. Some buy their plant materials or extracts from other producers. Others harvest sustainably in the wild – a practice known as wildcrafting. Some cultivate the plants in woodlots, greenhouses, cottage gardens, fields, and even on rooftops!"

The publication shares practical & technical insights from Dr. Mohammed's research into thousands of forest plants in Canada and the northern United States. She has documented more than 1700 northern plant species over the past 10 years – trees, shrubs, wildflowers, wetland plants, mushrooms, and more. Even plants usually dismissed as weeds have their uses.

Mohammed became curious about NTFPs while she was a research scientist at the **Ontario Forest Research Institute** in the 1990s, where she published the first overview of non-timber forest products in Ontario. Now, as Research Director and co-owner of **P&M Technologies** in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, she has expanded into national and international investigations.

"One of the needs that has surfaced repeatedly is for more practical startup information for businesses. Marketing help is also required. Until now, major Canadian non-timber publications have been more academic or policy-focused. We're ready to go beyond that."

The 867-page, full-colour, electronic *Companion* is a **reference guide on CD/DVD** for business start-ups, researchers, and economic developers. Products and services are organized by category: Food & Beverage, Materials & Manufacturing, Health & Personal Care, Decorative & Aesthetic, Environmental, Biofuels, and Landscape & Garden. There are business ideas, plant lists, equipment & costs, marketing helps, and business resources, with cross-references, indexes, and supplementary video clips.

"I wanted the reference to be practical yet have sufficient technical depth. I also needed a format that would allow convenient searching and updating," Mohammed says.

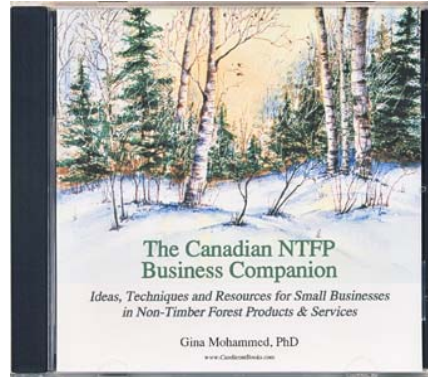
Release of *The Canadian NTFP Business Companion* complements the United Nations General Assembly's declaration of 2011 as the **International Year of Forests** to raise awareness of sustainable management, conservation, and sustainable development of all types of forests.

"I believe the non-timber industry, developed in a responsible manner, is vital to the health of Canada's forest sector. Along with a sound, value-added timber industry, the non-timber sector gives Canada the depth it needs for a truly sustainable forestry future."

The Canadian NTFP Business Companion is published by **Candlenut Books** in Sault Ste. Marie. For more information and excerpts, visit www.pmtech.ca. (To learn more about the International Year of Forests, visit the UN website at: www.UN.org/forests)



Author: Dr. Gina Mohammed



NTFP CD/DVD Cover Image

The web version of this Press Release – including links to the above photos – can be found here:

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More information on non-timber forest products (including excerpts from *The Canadian NTFP Business Companion*) can be found at: www.pmtech.ca