

Can I “Make” a Veneer Log?
by R. Scott Brundage
Consulting Forester/Tree Farmer

- Q. I hear that a veneer log is worth from 10 to 20 times more than a top log from the same tree or most other logs from other trees. True or False?
- A. That’s true, IF it’s a true veneer log. A veneer log is a larger straight log which has no defects such as limbs, limb scars, holes, rings-shake or separation, lightning scars, pin knots, bird-peck, or metal. Other factors such as sapwood width, color, ingrown bark, and mineral stains are also quality considerations. In summary a high -value veneer log is a perfect log.
- Q. I want high dollar veneer logs from my timber. Can I produce such logs?
- A. Yes, IF you manage your timber correctly. First, you have to manage veneer species for veneer logs. Black walnut and white oak produce over 95% of Missouri’s veneer logs. Add red oak and you have three species that produce over 99% of our state’s veneer logs. Other species, such as ash, maple, hickory, etc., occasionally have a veneer log and make up less than 1% combined.
- Q. O.K. My woods contain some black walnut, white oak, and some red oak and lots of other species. What do I do to produce or “make” a veneer log?
- A. Pick out the largest, straightest, full-crowned trees that are ideally 3 to 5 inches in diameter. These veneer potential trees can be made to grow or produce veneer logs IF properly released so they will grow tall and properly pruned to insure clear defect-free logs. Note that I use the word properly, because as with almost everything in life, there is a right way and a wrong way.
- Q. I want to do forest management the right way. How or where can I learn to do management properly?
- A. The very best single, immediate thing to do is join the Walnut Council and Other Fine Hardwoods organization. This organization is by far the best I have found in 55 years as a professional forester and Tree Farmer. Upon joining, you will be sent a packet of the best management bulletins available, worth far more than the \$50.00 membership. You will also receive a quarterly Bulletin magazine loaded with “how to” information, plus the opportunity to attend two state field day meetings and an annual national meeting. Interested parties may send a \$50.00 check payable to Walnut Council, Walnut Council International Headquarters, John S. Wright Forestry Center, 1007 N 725 W, West Lafayette, IN 47906-9431 or visit the website at www.walnutcouncil.org
- Q. You mention you are a Tree Farmer. What about the Tree Farm Program?
- A. Tree Farm Program is an excellent national program. It is also a recognition program for those that have completed some forest management following a management plan. The Walnut Council is more of a “how to” management organization, great for new or even more experienced forest landowners. In fact, the best advice is to join Walnut Council and learn to manage your timber, then, later, also become a Tree Farmer under the Tree Farm Program.

Remember, if you want to make much more money from your timberland and add value to your property, join the Walnut Council to learn how. If you own it—manage it!