

Driftwood --- Abundant Local Product

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Collectors Have Many Purposes

By Margaret Koch

Interested in free firewood?

Unusual pieces of "wood sculpture" for your garden and lawn?

Exotic centerpieces for your table?

Bases for lamps and coffee tables?

Small bits of wood to use with flower arrangements?

Whichever it might be, those clouds that hovered over-head in recent weeks had silver linings, after all, as far as local driftwood collectors are concerned. Every beach in the county was piled high with the fantastic stuff, from pieces the size of a pencil to roots and logs that weighed hundreds of pounds. And whole families took to the beaches for the fun of driftwood outing.

It is just a short walk to one of these treasure troves for Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Schot Jr. and their children, Tommy, Jane and Joan, who live at 300 14th avenue. The Schot family collected about a cord of driftwood for their fireplace.

Mrs. Schot pointed out that she also looks for small pieces, outstanding for their colors, which she uses for flower arrangements.

There are two driftwood "fish" swimming on the back lawn at the William Hottingers' home at 911 Laurent street. Their daughter, Ruth, an artist member of the Art league, found the "fish" on a local beach. She worked on the two pieces a little—but very little, as the less done to driftwood, the more natural interest it retains, she believes. She recommends a coat of dull shellac or varnish to weather-proof pieces to be used for lawn sculpture.

Mr. and Mrs. Pete Whitney of 422 Sequel avenue took off for Pescadero creek with a party of friends last week. Main purpose of the two-truck expedition was to find a driftwood base for a coffee table.

Mrs. Whitney reported that they found a "beauty" but since her husband estimated it weighed all of 800 pounds they had to leave it.

The Whitneys did bring back several truckloads of smaller pieces and they have placed some of the most unusual ones in their garden. But they aren't quite sure what to do with the mountain of driftwood which remains piled in their yard because they don't have a fireplace.

All driftwood hunters aren't amateurs, either. Mr. and Mrs. Harry T. Cox, who own the Pine Rose Nature shop near Ben Lomond are professional collectors

who work with designers and interior decorators. The Coxes make regular visits to the local beaches after storms and note that the Twin Lakes area is especially good. They also like to go up the coast to beaches above Davenport.

"We hunt with a purpose," Mrs. Cox emphasized. "Of course we look for design and beauty in wood. But we look for pieces that will make lamps, table bases, candelabra and other useful things as well."

She and her husband collected for about 30 years as a hobby, she said, but only started working at it professionally when he retired.

Florists also find driftwood useful and Dave Ferrari gets down to the beach occasionally after a storm to look over the newest crop.

According to him, florists use

lots of the smaller pieces in dish gardens. He uses a few larger specimens for window displays.

He says he dries the wood thoroughly, sand-blasting to bring out the grain.

Another effect can be obtained by brushing a bit of paint over it, just hitting the high spots.

He suggests that eye-catching driftwood "pictures" can be created with rocks, moss and flowers used in combination with pieces treated in these ways.

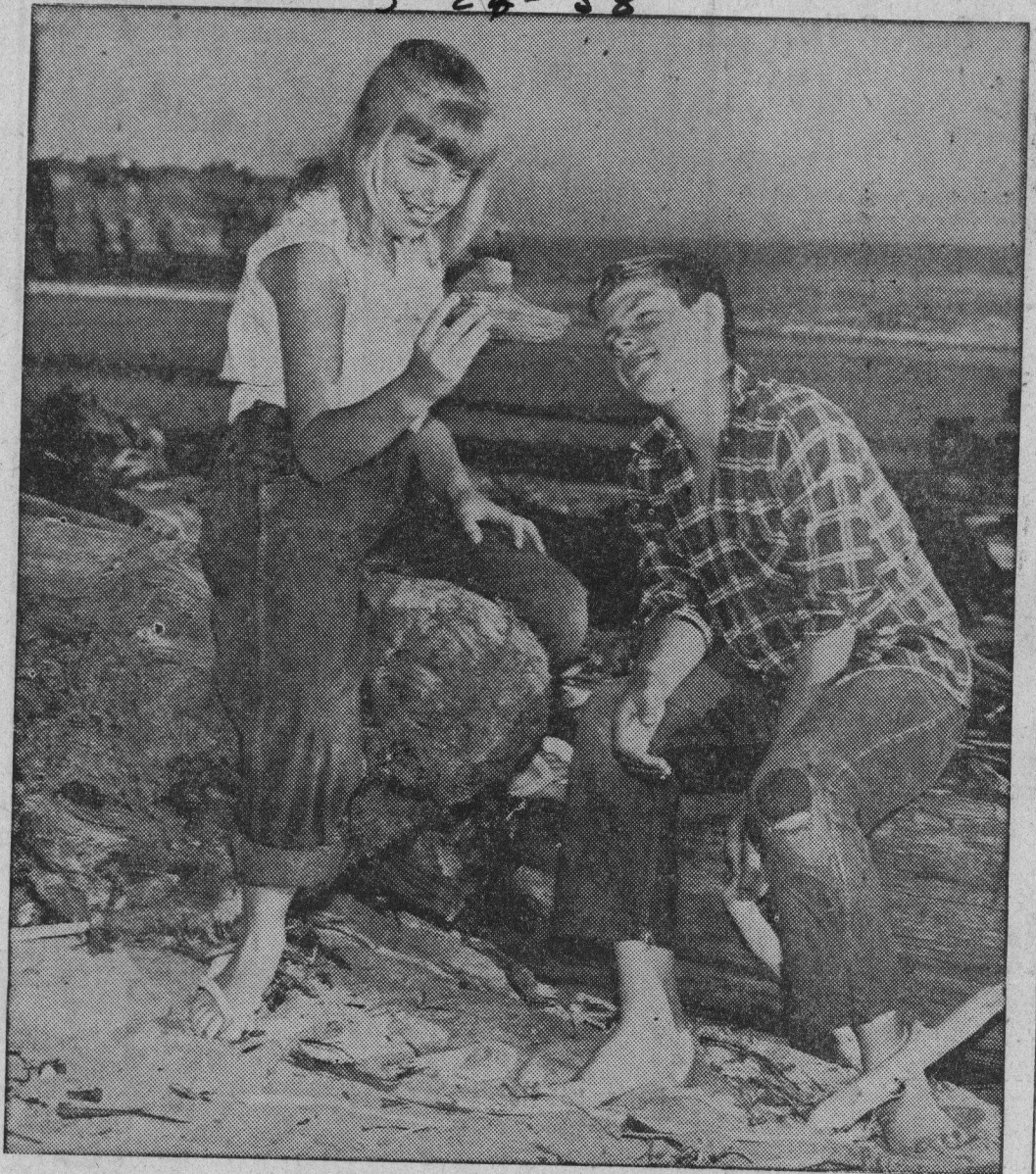
"Hand rubbing is another method of finishing small pieces of wood," Ferrari explained.

"Pieces that have been rubbed by hand—sometimes for hours, absorb the natural oils from the hand, and take on a beautiful luster."

He reported seeing a piece recently which had been hand-rubbed for more than 100 hours.

Collecting driftwood is a hobby

What the Shot family and other Santa Cruz collectors do with this abundant product from the sea is described in the accompanying article.



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that calls for spartan measures at times, according to Mrs. Bob Warne of 830 Mission street.

Urged on by a friend who made a striking coffee table, the whole Warne family including Chuck, Bob Jr. and their dog, Henry, scrambled down the cliff at Davenport in search of a table base.

They found one—a heavy one, and then their troubles began.

"We had difficulty in getting ourselves up and down that cliff," Mrs. Warne recalled, "and there we were with a monster of a driftwood stump to take home!"

They rigged up ropes and with the whole family working like beavers they finally got their prize into their car. But Mrs. Warne has two recommendations for hunters of driftwood who plan to climb down cliffs:

"Take ropes along and have plenty of liniment on hand for stiff muscles the next day."