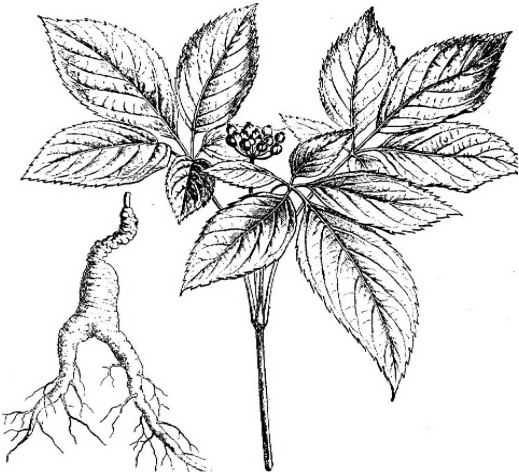


NYS Ginseng Harvesting Regulations



Conservation of American Ginseng

American Ginseng is an herbaceous plant native to the woodlands of the Appalachian Mountain range. Ginseng has been harvested for centuries for its medicinal properties, but its high value and slow growth led to widespread over-harvesting putting the wild population at risk. To ensure this plant remained healthy and wild across our landscape, NYS adopted conservation-minded regulations in 1987 that allow wild ginseng to be grown, stewarded and harvested while protecting a portion of the plants wild population.

Season

Regulation: Wild ginseng may be collected only between September 1st and November 30th of any year.

Conservation Benefits: Ginseng berries are ripe by September 1st. This ensure that the seeds in those berries are mature and ready to go into the ground to expand the plants population.

Maturity

Regulation: Wild plants may be collected only if they are at least five years old. Age is determined by counting stem scars. No plant with green, unripe fruit and immature seeds may be collected. All seeds from collected wild ginseng plants must be planted immediately within 50 feet of that plant.

Conservational Benefits: Plants younger than 5 years of age generally do not produce seeds. Ginseng does not propagate by roots in the wild. New plants can only develop from the seeds of other, mature plants. If a mature plant is found and harvested, the requirement of planting its mature seeds close by allows for the potential for new plants to grow and for that population to remain.

Landowner Permission

Regulation: Ginseng can only be harvested on private property by the landowner or with written permission of the landowner. No ginseng can be harvested from state lands, unless the harvested has received a permit. Permits are only issued for research.

Conservational Benefit: Requiring land ownership or written permission ensures that a harvester is not digging from someone else's patch. Ginseng stewards invest a great deal of time and money into a patch. Those efforts can be set back or wiped out by one dig. Harvesting only from private lands allows for population on state land to grow. As a very slow growing plant, it will take years or decades for these populations to rebound and remain.

Conservation Practices

When scouting for or harvesting wild ginseng, there are simple techniques that can increase your success while preserving the population and ecological health of New York's upland woods.

Do...	Don't...
Study the plant and conditions before harvesting. Learn to identify, age and assess the surrounding environment.	Contribute to unsustainable harvesting by digging before assessing the environment, plant and surrounding population.
Identify private lands and contact landowners with suitable conditions for scouting.	Trespass without landowner permission.
Scout for wild ginseng patches throughout the year and take note of population size and ages of wild plants	Dig the first plant you see. It might be the only one in that population. If you remove it, ginseng will no longer be found in that area.
Seek written permission from landowners before you dig	Hunt ginseng on state land
Check the age of wild plants by counting scars on the neck of the root just below the soil	Take a plant that hasn't produced ripe berries
Sow mature seeds near the wild plant you found them on	Bring mature seeds home to your garden beds
Re-assess population each year before harvesting	Over-harvest each year limiting sustainable population growth
Follow regulations and best practices for sale, distribution, or commercial wild-simulated production	Sell or distribute wild ginseng illegally

Sale of Wild Ginseng:

Beyond the regulations for harvesting, American Ginseng sale is also regulated and federally protected in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). For those interested in the sale of ginseng for profit, another set of regulations must be understood to ensure you are not in violation of this international agreement. To learn more about selling ginseng, visit the DEC website at

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7130.html>

Wild Simulated Ginseng:

New York State is an ideal region for wild-simulated ginseng production. This practice focuses on conservation through production and can provide producers, stewards or landowners a diversified and sustainable revenue source. This endeavor requires in-depth knowledge of production and regulations as sale and land leases are often central components to this approach. To learn more, contact your local Cornell Cooperative Extension association.

For more information, contact Tracey Testo, CCE Program Coordinator at the Agroforestry Resource Center by phone or email at 518-622-9820 x119, tet35@cornell.edu.