Wild Ginseng
its conservation in Indiana

Ginseng information

1: It is ILLEGAL to harvest wild ginseng out of season. (Class A misdemeanor)
2: To harvest LEGALLY, a ginseng plant must have: at least 3 prongs and a flowering or fruiting stalk, or at least 4 internodes on the rhizome. (Harvesting plants not meeting these criteria is a Class B infraction.)
3: It is REQUIRED that mature fruits and any seeds on the harvested ginseng be planted in the vicinity of where the plant was dug and in a manner that encourages germination.
4: It is REQUIRED that the entire stalk and leaves be retained with the plant until it is taken to the harvester’s residence or place of business, unless the root has at least 4 internodes on the rhizome.
5: It is ILLEGAL to sell or remove mature fruits and seeds from the vicinity of where the ginseng was taken.
6: It is ILLEGAL to buy, sell, or possess any ginseng out of season without written authorization from the DNR Division of Law Enforcement. (A Class B misdemeanor)
7: It is ILLEGAL to buy uncertified ginseng for resale without an Indiana Ginseng Dealer’s License. (A Class B misdemeanor)
8: ONLY certified ginseng can be sold to a buyer in another state. (Exporting uncertified ginseng is a Class A misdemeanor.)
9: HARVEST ginseng only where it is permitted—digging on State property is not allowed; digging on private property without permission is theft; digging on other properties may require a permit.
10: Anyone violating these rules will be prosecuted.

Purpose of the ginseng law

The purpose of Indiana’s ginseng program (Public Law 107 (IC 14-4-8) and Ginseng Rule (312 IAC 19) is to ensure a healthy population for the future. The HARVEST SEASON was instituted to encourage replanting of the seeds when they are ripe and ensure that only mature plants are taken. Registration of dealers and certification of ginseng is required in order to monitor the health of the population. The SELLING SEASON was established for this purpose. Ginseng that is bought for resale must be certified by an Indiana Conservation Officer. Monitoring reports from dealers assists the DNR in determining if ginseng is declining and needs further protection.
DEALER LICENSE YEAR – September 1 of current year through August 31 of next year.

HARVEST SEASON – September 1 through December 31 of each year.

SELLING SEASON – September 1 of current year through March 31 of the next year.

HARVESTING – Is not allowed on any State property. Is not allowed on private property without owner’s permission.

PLANT REQUIREMENTS – At least 3 prongs and a flowering or fruiting stalk; or at least 4 internodes on the rhizome. Seeds must be planted at the harvesting site. Fruits and seeds cannot be sold or removed from the harvested area.

GINSENG POSSESSION – A dealer cannot be in possession of ginseng after March 31 unless the ginseng is certified. A harvester cannot be in possession of ginseng after December 31 without written authorization of the Indiana DNR.

ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT – due no later than April 30 (which is 30 days after the last day of the selling season, March 31).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) limits the export of wild ginseng to roots that are 5 years of age or older. Indiana's ginseng law requires ginseng roots have at least 4 internodes (leaf scars). The USFWS will require at least 5 internodes on each root. Federal inspectors at the points of export will be inspecting barrels, and not allowing shipment of immature roots. This is to help ensure the long-term conservation and sustainable use of this important natural resource.

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For questions concerning the laws and enforcement contact
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