

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resource Commission**

ITEM

16

INFORMATIONAL

TOPIC

Ginseng Harvesting in Iowa

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service oversees a nationwide program on ginseng and regulates the import/export of the plant (roots and seeds included). The Iowa Legislature has also specifically granted the Department with the authority to establish and manage a program regarding the taking, harvesting, and dealing of ginseng in Iowa.

The popularity of ginseng is growing, resulting in a very lucrative crop for ginseng growers, harvesters, and dealers. Moreover, demand for wild-grown ginseng is growing, which impacts the sustainability of the resource in its natural setting. Department staff within Wildlife and Law Enforcement bureaus have reviewed the current ginseng program and have determined there is a need to make changes to Iowa Administrative Code 571, Chapter 78 “Ginseng Harvesting and Sale” to ensure this resource is protected. The federal government’s increased enforcement in other states is also motivating the team to address new rules in Iowa now.

Current regulations allow for the harvesting of ginseng from all state lands except state parks and preserves during the harvest season (September 1st - October 31st). The Department may consider prohibiting the harvesting wild ginseng on state lands.

Kenneth Herring, Administrator
Conservation and Recreation Division
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