IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa Regulations for the Harvest, Cultivation and Sale of Wild American Ginseng

Mike Macke

About Wild American Ginseng

Wild American ginseng has been harvested in the United States for more than 250 years. It is a slow-growing herbaceous plant adapted to low-light conditions. Management of the harvest and export of ginseng is the responsibility of the State of Iowa through the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in accordance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The U.S. Department of the Interior, through the Fish & Wildlife Service, monitors the state's compliance and enforcement of laws supporting the sustainable harvest of American ginseng. By practicing sustainable harvesting techniques, Iowans can ensure the future of ginseng populations and production for future generations.

- ***Wild ginseng*** means an unprocessed plant, dry or live green root, rhizome, seed or other part of ginseng, which is growing in or has been collected from its native habitat, including ginseng plants which have arisen from a seed that is planted in the wild, or which have been transplanted into native habitat. Wild ginseng is ginseng that has not been grown or nurtured by a person beyond planting of seeds or plants.
- ***Cultivated ginseng*** means ginseng that is nurtured, artificially propagated or maintained under controlled conditions from a seed, cutting, division, callus tissue, root, rhizome, other plant tissue, spore, or other propagule that has been derived from cultivated parental stock.

Permits Required

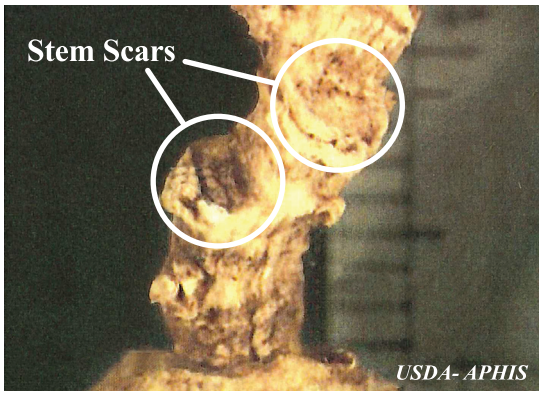
- An ***Iowa Ginseng Harvester*** permit is required to harvest wild ginseng. The permit must be carried at all times when harvesting, transporting or while in possession of ginseng. Harvester permits are valid from September 1 until March 15 of the following year.
- A person must have an ***Iowa Grower's Permit*** to cultivate ginseng. Grower's permits are valid for five years.
- ***Iowa Ginseng Dealer Permit***s are required to buy ginseng. A dealer's permit shall be valid for a license year from April 1 until March 31 of the following year. Monthly and annual reports, along with records retention, are required of dealers.

Iowa Regulations

Ginseng harvest is currently allowed in just 19 states in the United States. Each year, Iowa is required to report harvest statics to the Endangered Species Scientific Authority. Based on the information provided, the Fish & Wildlife Service determines whether to continue to allow the export of wild ginseng from each state. For a complete copy of regulations governing American ginseng, find the Iowa Administrative Rules 571, Chapter 78 on the DNR's Ginseng Information webpage: go to www.iowadnr.gov and type "Ginseng" in the search box.

Ginseng may be harvested from September 1 to October 31. From November 1 through the following August 31, no person shall harvest, dig, cut, uproot, gather, disturb or destroy ginseng, whether the ginseng is wild or cultivated.
A person shall not possess green ginseng from November 21 through August 31. Ginseng harvesters and growers may sell ginseng from September 1 through March 15. A harvester may retain no more than four ounces of dry wild ginseng for personal consumption for one year beyond the expiration date of the permit. Ginseng root retained for personal use after March 15 may not be sold. Ginseng harvesters, growers and buyers must display their ginseng license when transacting business with ginseng.

No person shall harvest ginseng unless the plant possesses three or more prongs and a flowering or fruiting stalk with red fruits. If, after digging, it is determined the root has less than five stem scars, the person shall carefully replant the ginseng in the same location. All persons harvesting wild ginseng shall plant all seeds collected from such plants within 100 feet of the parent plant. Seeds should be planted by gently pinching the fruit. Seeds must be planted by pressing the seed no more than one inch into the soil with your finger. Seed from wild ginseng may not be sold or transported away from the site. When harvesting wild ginseng, the entire plant, except the fruit and seeds, shall be retained with the plant until the plant is taken to the harvester's residence or place of business.



USDA- APHIS

Public owned and managed lands are closed to ginseng harvest. No person shall at any time possess, harvest, dig, cut, uproot, gather, plant, propagate, intentionally disturb or destroy ginseng or ginseng seed on publicly owned or managed lands.
Landowner permission is required before harvesting ginseng on private land.

No person may import, export or possess wild ginseng originating from another state unless the wild ginseng is accompanied by a valid certificate of origin from the other state.

Every shipment of ginseng to a location outside the state of Iowa shall be accompanied by a shipping certificate. Appointments are required to obtain a shipping certificate. Call 563-927-3276 (Manchester) to schedule an appointment.

The Iowa DNR serves as the state's ginseng coordinator;
for more information go to *www.iowadnr.gov* or call 515-725-8200.

Poaching is a Crime!

If you observe or know of a ginseng violation, report it to TIP as soon as possible by calling 1-800-532-2020. Provide as much information as possible when you call, such as a description of the possible violator, the vehicle, and the time and location of the violation. A Conservation Officer will be dispatched to investigate. Since the TIP program began in 1985, more than $180,000 has been approved in reward payments.

of iowa, inc.

Turn In Poachers
1-800-532-2020
www.iowadnr.gov/tip

You can remain anonymous!

Equal Opportunity

Federal and State law prohibits employment and/or public accommodation (such as access to services or physical facilities) discrimination on the basis of age, color, creed, disability (mental and/or physical), gender identity, nation origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, contact the Iowa Civil Rights Commission at 1-800-457-4416, or write to the address below.

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Wallace State Office Building
502 East Ninth Street
Des Moines IA 50319-0034
Phone: 515-725-8200
Fax: 515-725-8201

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www.iowadnr.gov