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## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT GINSENG HARVESTING IN WEST VIRGINIA**

### **WHAT STATE LAWS REGULATE GINSENG?**

West Virginia Code §19-1A-3a mandates that the Division of Forestry weigh and certify all ginseng roots dug in the state. Ginseng plants must be at least 5 years old or older and have at least 3 prongs before they can be harvested. Seeds from the plant must be planted on the site of the harvest. Ginseng must be certified before leaving the boundaries of the state. Only registered dealers can certify ginseng.

### **WHAT FEDERAL LAWS REGULATE GINSENG?**

Requirements for the export of wild ginseng out of the country are established by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. All ginseng plants must be at least 5 years of age and have at least 3 prongs before being harvested and therefore eligible for export.

### **HOW DO I DETERMINE THE AGE OF GINSENG ROOTS?**

The age of a ginseng plant can be determined by looking at the base of the plant stem, where "bud scars" occur. A 5 year old ginseng root will have at least 4 scars; the first year the root does not produce a scar.

### **WHEN CAN I DIG GINSENG?**

The West Virginia ginseng digging season runs from September 1 through November 30 of each year.

### **DO I NEED A PERMIT OR LICENSE TO DIG GINSENG?**

No.

### **WHEN CAN I SELL GINSENG TO A REGISTERED DEALER?**

The buying of green ginseng can start on September 1. The buying of dry ginseng should start after September 15 of each year. The selling season ends March 31 of each year.

### **MUST I SELL MY GINSENG THIS YEAR OR CAN I HOLD IT UNTIL NEXT YEAR?**

In order to be able to hold or keep ginseng from season to season, you must have a weight receipt. A weight receipt is a record of the ginseng dug during the current year and may be obtained from a weigh station. The original weight receipt must accompany the ginseng when it is eventually sold.

### **CAN I DIG GINSENG ON ANYBODY'S PROPERTY?**

An individual must have written permission to dig on private property. If that individual is caught digging ginseng illegally he or she can be prosecuted via the Trespass Law.

### **CAN I DIG GINSENG ON PUBLIC LANDS?**

Digging of ginseng is not permitted on State Forests, State Parks, or other state-owned public lands. Permits to dig ginseng on the Monongahela National Forest may be obtained by calling (304) 636-1800. There is a fee associated with these permits.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HARVESTING AND SELLING GINSENG,  
CALL THE WEST VIRGINIA DIVISION OF FORESTRY AT (304) 558-2788.**