

Harvesting Ginseng

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West Virginia has a new law that regulates the growing, digging, and selling of ginseng. The W.Va. Division of Forestry will administer the regulations after the legislature approves them. A few of the regulations are described here.

It is now unlawful to plant ginseng seeds or plants and to dig, collect, or gather ginseng on public lands in West Virginia.

The digging season for wild ginseng is from September 1 through November 30. A grower may also harvest woods-grown or wild simulated ginseng during that same period. Cultivated ginseng may be harvested throughout the year.

Permits and Regulations:



A ginseng digger **MUST** have written permission on their person when harvesting wild ginseng on another person's enclosed (fenced) or posted lands.

Anyone wishing to **grow** wild, woods-grown, wild simulated, or cultivated ginseng must submit the following to the W.Va. Division of Forestry:

- A map of the exact planting location prepared by a licensed surveyor or certified forester

- A written statement that the planting area is free from wild ginseng
- An indication of willingness to keep records of the operation for a minimum of 10 years.

People who **harvest** ginseng must buy a \$10 annual permit. All commercial plants and roots must be sold to a licensed dealer so the state's total harvest can be certified and monitored. Ginseng is a valuable crop; the price of a pound of dry root has averaged \$325 in recent years.

More information about ginseng may be obtained from the W.Va. Division of Forestry (304)558-2788).

These four categories of ginseng can be grown and harvested:

Type	About Plants
<i>Wild Ginseng</i>	Plants are not nurtured by people, But a harvester must plant seeds at the same site where a natural plant is dug. Wild ginseng cannot be dug until it is 5 years old.
<i>Woods-grown Ginseng</i>	Plants are grown in prepared beds in the woods using trees for necessary shade. The grower may use chemical or mechanical agents to control weeds, diseases, or pests.
<i>Wild Simulated Ginseng</i>	Plants are grown in the woods but not in prepared beds; no chemical weed, disease, or pest control agents may be used.
<i>Cultivated Ginseng</i>	Plants are grown under artificial shade in prepared beds, similar to a garden vegetable.