



The “Wild” American Ginseng Industry: Collectors & Cultivators

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Issues not in industry control

- ❑ **Habitat destruction/fragmentation**
 - ❑ Human use (roads, housing, golf courses, etc.)
 - ❑ Mining (e.g., mountain top removal)
- ❑ **Habitat alteration**
 - ❑ Silviculture
 - ❑ Timbering (inc. selective harvest)
 - ❑ Deer browse
 - ❑ Invasive plants
- ❑ **CITES definition: “artificial propagation”**
- ❑ **Decreasing market demand**

Influences on sustainability

- ❑ **Good Stewardship Harvest brochures**
- ❑ **Planting of seed of harvested (“wild”) plants**
- ❑ **Planting of cultivated seed**
- ❑ **Planting of rhizomes**
- ❑ **Support for state licensing of individual collectors**

Good Stewardship brochures

- ❑ **Cooperative effort by AHPA, FWS, UpS and RAGA (Ohio)**
- ❑ **One for each (19) exporter state**
- ❑ **No cost for use**
- ❑ **Cited or posted by several states and ginseng dealer web sites**

Good Stewardship brochures

❑ Focus on “good stewardship practices”

- ❑ Get permission
- ❑ Mature plants only
- ❑ Ripe seeds only
- ❑ Plant seeds ($\frac{3}{4}$ -1 inch)
- ❑ Leave some mature plants

Good Stewardship brochures

❑ Include state-specific information:

- ❑ State licensing requirements (diggers and dealers)
- ❑ State’s harvest / selling season
- ❑ State rules on harvest status (age; # prongs; seed planting; etc.)
- ❑ Contact information for state ginseng coordinator
- ❑ Information on harvest in National Forests within the state

Planting wild seed

- ❑ On “Good Stewardship Checklist” in harvest brochures
- ❑ Instructions to plant at $\frac{3}{4}$ -1 inch
- ❑ Seed planted at 2 cm (.8 in) = 8-fold increase in germination (McGraw, 2002, unpublished)
- ❑ Questions:
 - ❑ Number of viable seeds at time of harvest?
 - ❑ Proportion of seed planted?
 - ❑ Germination rate?
 - ❑ Proportion surviving to harvest age?

Planting cultivated seed

- ❑ Woodland planting last 10 years*:
 - ❑ 10,300-21,500 pounds of seeds
 - ❑ ~60-170 million seeds
 - ❑ Annual average: 6-17M seeds
- ❑ Questions:
 - ❑ Germination rate?
 - ❑ Portion surviving to harvest age?

* Based on actual amounts reported from just 6 ginseng dealers

Planting cultivated seed

- ❑ **Woodland planting last 10 years:**
 - ❑ Annual average: 6-17 million seeds
- ❑ **Annual harvest last 10 years:**
 - ❑ Average: 63,644# = 15.9-19.1M plants
 - ❑ High: 78,152# (2003) = 19.5-23.4M plants
 - ❑ Low: 44,920# (2005) = 11.2-13.4M plants

Planting cultivated seed

- ❑ **Woodland planting last 10 years:**
 - ❑ Annual average: 6-17 million seeds
- ❑ **Ratio: planted seeds (ea) / harvested roots (ea) last 10 years:**
 - ❑ Average: 33-108%
 - ❑ High (2003): 27-88%
 - ❑ Low (2005): 46-153%
- ❑ **Questions:**
 - ❑ Germination rate?
 - ❑ Portion surviving to harvest age?

Planting cultivated seed

I have hunted sang almost all my life and have dibbled in little patches in my backyard from sang i got out in the hills. Thinking the seed that i planted from the wild sang would also in return be wild. But ever since I started researching and talking to the people that i have bought seed from say that once we intervene with mother nature and plant the seeds ourselves it no longer is wild sang. Even though if you use the wild simulated method you can not tell them from wild roots. So this leads me to the big question if that is the case wouldn't most sang we dig out in the hills be tame. Think about this for a minute, our grandfathers and forefathers that dug sang planted the seed back that they fount from plants and even though the seed is in the wild they still took mother nature out of the picture and put those seed in the ground. In return supposedly making the new sang something other than wild sang. I know myself i have dug a many of patches where my papaw told me to go from where he could remember planting a bunch of berries in the past. In return i sold it for wild.

Planting cultivated seed

There are differing thoughts and schools as to seed source. Yes it would be great to have all native seed but, with all the sang that has been dug and sold over the past couple hundred years, any sang growing in an area was probably due to someone planting the seed there. It may be difficult to find seed for this year but, there are sources and the best thing to do is find some ginseng dealers (buyers) and ask them about seed. Much of the seed available will come from ginseng farms in Michigan or Canada. There is nothing wrong with their seed as far as germination and growing.

Planting rhizomes

❑ Some viability documented

- ❑ 13% (averaged over 4 years) whole rhizomes/rhizome propagules produced reproductive plants (Van der Voort et al., 2003)
- ❑ 11-40% whole rhizomes sprouted in one year (Beyfuss; continuing, unpublished)

❑ Questions:

- ❑ Prevalence of practice?
- ❑ Portion surviving to harvest age?

State licensing for harvesters

❑ AHPA supports licensing requirement for digger/sellers

- ❑ Now required in 6 states (AL: \$10; IL: \$7.50; IA: \$11; MD: \$2; VT: n/c; WI: \$15.75)

❑ Modest cost; should be retained for state ginseng programs

- ❑ Will seek input from state ginseng coordinators



THANK YOU!

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THE VOICE OF THE HERBAL PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

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