

IMPORTANT INFORMATION



Good Stewardship Checklist

Follow all of these good stewardship practices when harvesting goldenseal root:

- ✓ Maintain current legal permits and licenses to harvest as well as permission from property owners.
- ✓ Do not harvest in any national park; obtain permits for harvest in national forests where allowed.
- ✓ Harvest just prior to winter dormancy for population health and to maximize your return.
- ✓ Do not harvest more than 30% of mature plants. Leave immature plants.
- ✓ Replant seeds, plant back rhizome pieces containing buds.

RESEARCH SUPPORTED BY



FOR MORE INFORMATION

USDA Plants Database: https://plants.usda.gov/DocumentLibrary/plantguide/pdf/pg_hyca.pdf



AMERICAN HERBAL PHARMACOPOEIA®

AHP Goldenseal Monograph: <https://herbal-ahp.org/online-ordering-goldenseal-root/>

American Herbal Products Association

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Download Brochure as PDF:

https://www.ahpa.org/Files/Good-Stewardship-Harvesting-Brochure_Goldenseal.pdf
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The information herein is believed to be accurate but does not replace the laws that govern goldenseal harvest. Make sure you know and follow all state laws and regulations where you harvest goldenseal.

GOOD STEWARDSHIP HARVESTING

of

GOLDENSEAL (*Hydrastis canadensis*)

Goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*) is a clonal (colony forming) plant in the buttercup family (Ranunculaceae). Its name refers to the color and appearance of the underground rhizome. While the rhizome (often referred to as 'root') is historically the part most commonly harvested for medicinal use, there is also a growing market for the aerial parts of the plant. Goldenseal's native range encompasses eastern North America, mainly east of the Mississippi as far north as Quebec and south to Georgia.

Goldenseal is an economically important medicinal plant with 2-3 distinct palmate leaflets. The deep, yellow-colored roots are of high value in the natural products trade. Medicinal properties are derived from three main alkaloids extracted from the rhizome and root hairs of the plant. Due to conservation concerns over wild harvest, goldenseal was added to Appendix II of CITES in 1997 (CITES, 2000), is assigned a national rank of N4 and global rank of G3G4 by the Nature Conservancy, and is on the IUCN Red List of threatened species.

Common names: goldenseal, orange root, yellow puccoon, yellow root, turmeric root, wild curcuma, eye root, eye balm, yellow eye.



Leaves and flower of *H. canadensis* © 2022 Eric Burkhart



Leaves of *H. canadensis* © 2022 Eric Burkhart



Fruit of *H. canadensis* © 2022 Eric Burkhart

Site Selection

- ✎ Evaluate the area to ensure it is free of environmental contaminants.
- ✎ Ensure the site is healthy and has not recently been harvested by others.
- ✎ Keep detailed records of site locations and other collection data including, time, quantity harvested, other species present, etc.
- ✎ Carry all permits and licenses when collecting.

Good Stewardship Harvesting Guidelines

- ✎ Harvest roots of only up to 30% of mature fruiting plants, leaving 70% of mature plants and all juveniles to propagate.
- ✎ Harvesting roots in fall may result in faster population recovery than harvest in mid-summer.
- ✎ Plant back rhizome parts that contain buds in order to sustain the population
- ✎ Do not harvest from the same population year after year. Only go back to the same stand once every three or four years.
- ✎ Do not dig in areas where others have already recently harvested roots.
- ✎ There is a growing market for aerial parts of goldenseal, which also contain medicinally active compounds. Consider accessing these markets as a more sustainable option to root harvest.

Sustaining Native Populations

- ✎ Roots should be harvested only from mature plants after the leaves begin to yellow, signifying the annual growth cycle is nearing completion.
- ✎ Harvest only 30% of mature and/or fruiting plants, leaving 70% of mature plants and all juveniles in each population to continue to grow.
- ✎ Goldenseal can be successfully propagated via seed and rhizome division. Cultivation should be considered as a sustainable alternative to wild harvest.

Harvest Season

While no state or federal agency mandates a harvest season, it is common practice to harvest when plants are entering winter dormancy (late summer or fall depending on location).

Harvesting in fall is good practice to sustain wild populations as it provides an opportunity for plant reproduction.

Harvesting just prior to winter dormancy also maximizes harvester return in two ways:

- 1.) There is greater below ground biomass just prior to winter dormancy than earlier; and
- 2.) Moisture content is lower just prior to dormancy compared with earlier in the season, requiring fewer rhizomes harvested for similar dry yields.

Finally, always check with buyers before harvesting.



Roots of *H. canadensis* © 2022 Eric Burkhart

NATIONAL FOREST COLLECTION

Permits to collect plants or plant material can be obtained at USDA Forest Service District Offices. Permit types vary depending on collection needs; Forest Service personnel will help determine which type is appropriate.

Permit types and cost may vary within forests and regionally. For example, a permit to harvest in the Wayne National Forest in Ohio is currently \$20 and allows for collection only in certain areas of the forest, requires collectors to state which species they will gather, and also requires personal and vehicle identification.

The permit system is used to collect fees and to authorize removal of forest products that are expected to have limited resource impacts. The permit allows legal removal of forest products from areas where such removal would be illegal without a permit. Collecting without a permit can result in steep fines.



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