Ginseng Harvesting

on the Chattahoochee National Forest

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Southern Region

Ginseng is a native plant of Georgia that grows mostly in cool, moist mountain forests. This perennial herb is prized for its large, fleshy roots which are believed to have medicinal value. Permits are required to collect wild ginseng in the national forest.

Range-wide, wild ginseng populations have declined over the past decade. Forest Service officials are limiting the harvesting of wild ginseng in the Chattahoochee National Forest because of concerns about sustainable harvest levels. We believe it is in everyone's best interest to limit the amount of the harvest to help ensure that the plant's future sustainability is protected.

The process for permitting wild ginseng harvests in the Chattahoochee National Forest includes:

- 40 permits may be issued for the Blue Ridge Ranger District and 2 permits may be issued for the Conasauga Ranger District. No ginseng permits will be issued for the Chattooga River Ranger District or the Oconee National Forest.
- Permits will be issued through a lottery system, with entries randomly selected by each district office. Lottery entries can be made by calling or visiting the issuing district office before August 1, 2014.
- A permit allows the harvest of 1/2 wet pound of wild ginseng in the ranger district where the permit is issued. (Three wet pounds are equivalent to one dry pound.)
- Permits are $20 each.
- Harvesting is allowed for 2 weeks only, September 1-14, 2014.
- Harvesting is prohibited in all designated Wilderness areas. Each district ranger may further limit ginseng harvests to certain areas of the national forest to allow the plants to regenerate, or to protect other natural areas. Harvest area descriptions and maps will be provided to permit holders.

In addition to reducing the legal harvest of wild ginseng, the Forest Service is increasing law enforcement efforts to reduce poaching. We are also developing a long-term strategy for managing sustainable ginseng populations that will include increased monitoring efforts.

These efforts will allow the Forest Service and partners to assess whether future measures may be needed to protect and preserve this important plant for generations to come.

For more information about applying for a ginseng permit, contact:

Blue Ridge Ranger District
2042 Highway 515 West
Blairsville, GA 30512
Phone: 706 745-6928

Conasauga Ranger District
3941 Highway 76
Chatsworth, GA 30705
Phone: 706 695-6736

Learn more about this and other permits issued by visiting our website:

http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/conf/passes-permits

Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests

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