



Cherokee National Forest

2800 Ocoee Street N.

Cleveland, TN 37312

Web: <http://fs.usda.gov/chokeee>

News Release

Media Contact: (423) 476-9700

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Forest Service Announces Ginseng Permit Process for 2015

CLEVELAND, TENN (June 29, 2015) - U.S. Forest Service officials announced that the period for applying for 2015 ginseng permits for the Cherokee National Forest will be August 3 –August 28. A random permit drawing will be held to determine who may purchase a ginseng harvesting permit. Ginseng collecting is limited because of concerns for overall reductions in wild ginseng population numbers throughout its natural range.

For 2015 a maximum of 40 permits will be issued allowing 25 roots (approximately ¼ pound) per permit to be collected. The 2015 Cherokee National Forest ginseng permitting and harvesting process will be as follows:

- The 2015 ginseng collection season will be from **September 16- September 30**. This two week period will be the only time that ginseng can be legally collected in the Cherokee National Forest by valid permit holders.
- The Forest Service will issue a **total of 40** permits, each with a **maximum limit** of 25 roots.
- A drawing will be held to determine the 40 permittees. Twenty permits will be issued for the northern half of the Forest (Watauga & Unaka Ranger Districts) and twenty permits will be issued for the southern half of the Forest (Tellico & Ocoee Ranger Districts).
- Permit drawing applicants may only apply for either the north or the south Cherokee NF.
- Permits will cost \$20 and are limited to one permit per person per year. Permittees must be at least 18 years of age.
- Five ginseng collection zones have been designated for the north Cherokee NF (Watauga & Unaka Districts), and five collection zones for the south Cherokee NF (Tellico & Ocoee Districts). One zone on each half of the Forest will be open for collecting each year. Collection zones will be rotated each year to allow plants a five year recovery period necessary to help ensure populations remain sustainable.
- For 2015 the following zones will be open:
 - **North Cherokee NF** – *Zone: 2* (Cherokee NF land within Greene County)
 - **South Cherokee NF** – *Zone: 3* (Cherokee NF land from the Hiwassee River to HWY 68)

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All persons interested in obtaining a permit to collect ginseng in either the north or the south Cherokee National Forest for the 2015 season must submit a letter of request to:

U.S. Forest Service
2800 Ocoee Street North
Cleveland, TN 37312
ATTN: Ginseng Permits

Letters of request can be sent to the office listed above between August 3 and August 28, 2015 and must be received no later than August 28 to be included in the drawing. Letters **must** include:

- Applicant's full name (person who will do collecting)
- Mailing address
- Phone number of the individual who will do the collecting
- Which section of the Forest permit is being requested for – north Cherokee NF **or** south Cherokee NF (only one section can be applied for)

Successful permittees will be notified by letter beginning the week of September 7. In order to obtain the permit, individuals must bring the letter of notification and valid ID to the Ranger District Office identified in the notification letter to pay for and sign the permit prior to collecting. Once notified, successful applicants may obtain their permits immediately or anytime during the open season (September 16-30).

If you have questions or need additional information please call: Unaka Ranger District – 423-638-4109 or Ocoee Ranger District – 423-338-3300; or visit the web site: <http://fs.usda.gov/cherokee>

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