

National Forests in North Carolina

Fact Sheet: *Panax quinquefolius*



Common Name: American Ginseng, Seng

Plant: Long-lived perennial (50 years +) characterized by 3-5 palmately compound leaves (prongs). Mature plants have a multi-forked taproot that is sold as a medicinal root primarily within the Orient.

Flowers: Terminal umbel with tiny white flowers May to June, red fruits mature in late August to early September.

Global Range: Broadly distributed in Eastern North America from Quebec province to Minnesota and south to Georgia and Oklahoma. **NC Range:** Primarily occurring in the Mountains, with scattered populations in the western Piedmont plus a few in the Coastal Plain. **Habitat:** Prefers mesic hardwood forest, primarily Rich Cove Forest.

Southern Appalachian Harvest: Collected as medicinal crop for more than 2 centuries.



Harvest rates within western North Carolina varying from 6000 to 10,000 dried lbs annually for the past 20 years. Ginseng roots are harvested on all Ranger Districts with greater intensity on the Wayah, Nantahala, and Appalachian Ranger Districts. Permits have been issued annually for the last several years.

Permit: Issued from September 1 through September 30. Cost is \$40/wet lb. Minimum permit one wet lb. Limit of 3 lb. collection annually. Harvest

prohibited in Wilderness and Natural Areas.

Regulatory Agency: American ginseng is on Appendix II list of the Convention of International Trade of Endangered Species. The Division of Scientific Authority, US Fish & Wildlife Service is the regulatory agency that evaluates the biological and management status of wild American ginseng throughout its native range. The Division issues an annual

or biennial report detailing if any harvest conditions need to be modified to ensure the sustainable harvest of wild native ginseng.

