

ATTENTION ROOT DIGGERS

A number of laws and regulations govern the digging or taking of plants or plant parts in Missouri. Common law considers plants to be the property of the landowner. Therefore, plants may be legally taken only with the landowner's permission. With the exception of rare or endangered species, plants may always be taken from private land with the landowner's permission.

Public lands in Missouri are managed by a number of agencies, and restrictions on the digging or taking of plants vary. The regulations of several public agencies are summarized below. If you have questions about the legality of collecting plants from any site, you should contact the landowner or managing public agency for specific information.

The guidelines below do not pertain to timber management practices on public lands where various policies govern commercial harvest and firewood cutting.

U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service

Manages National Wildlife Refuges

No digging or taking of plants or plant parts is allowed, except that small quantities of fruits, berries, and nuts may be gathered for personal consumption.

Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Manages State Parks, State Historic Sites, and many State Natural Areas

No digging or taking of plants or plant parts is allowed, except that wild fruits may be picked for personal consumption at the site. These fruits may not be carried outside the park or historic site.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Manages land around most of Missouri's large lakes and reservoirs as well as along the Mississippi River

No digging or taking of plants or plant parts is allowed.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service

Manages Mark Twain National Forest land which includes several Wilderness Areas

No digging of roots or taking of plants is allowed. The taking of berries and nuts for personal consumption is allowed. Commercial collecting is prohibited.

U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service

Manages Scenic Riverways, National Battlefields, and National Monuments

No digging or taking of plants is allowed. Small quantities of certain fruits, berries and nuts may be gathered for personal consumption only as designated by each area's superintendent.

Missouri Department of Highways and Transportation

Manages state and interstate highway rights-of-way

House Bill No. 536 (passed and signed into law, 1993) prohibits the digging of plants from roadsides of state and interstate highways.

County Public Works Departments – Road and Bridge Divisions

Manages county road rights-of-way

House Bill No. 536 also prohibits the digging of plants from county roadsides.