

American ginseng is a perennial plant that grows native in forested areas of the Eastern United States. Ginseng is highly sought after in East Asia for its medicinal properties, including lower blood pressure and cholesterol, reduce stress, and enhance strength. Due to over-harvesting in the 1970s, ginseng is now protected under the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES). CITES is enforced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which allows each state to regulate harvest and trade of ginseng. Cultivated ginseng is included with wild ginseng because of similarities. 25 states are authorized by U.S. FWS to administer ginseng programs; North Dakota is among 6 of those who only regulate cultivated ginseng. We are required to submit a harvest report to U.S. FWS annually. The current process requires growers and dealers to be registered. We currently have two registered growers, only one who is actively growing, and to my knowledge, North Dakota has never had a dealer registered.

- Requires nearly full shade to grow/thrives in climates receiving 40 inches of precipitation per year and highly organic soil with a low pH.
- Difficult to grow, requires heavy input to be profitable
- Seeds take on average 18 months to germinate. Usually grown for three to five years before harvestable
- Average current selling price of fresh wild ginseng roots is ~\$500-600 per pound. A 2-ounce dried root is worth ~\$75. Fresh roots were found selling on eBay for \$100/4-6 ounces. (Cultivated ginseng is valued at ~\$50/pound), the older the root, the higher the value
- Annually value of ginseng in the U.S. is ~\$27 million
- Marketed in toothpastes, soft drinks, tea, candy, chewing gum, or in powdered, extract or whole root forms

---Sources: Purdue University; USDA FS; Jim Erickson

**Notes from our Grower**

Jim Erickson, of Cavalier has been registered since 2000, but has never reported a harvested. It is very difficult to establish in our climate. Seeds germinate easily but on about 10% survive year one, by the third year only 1%. He has planted thousands of seeds, and only has about 100 currently. Wildlife will come through and eat the berries and the leaves. When planted too close together, they easily succumb to diseases. This year he was able to collect seed from his plants, which he will be planting. He expects to have a small harvest next year.

