

GUIDE TO WISCONSIN'S WILD GINSENG REGULATIONS

Wild Ginseng is American Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) that:

1. is naturally occurring and is not grown or nurtured in any way, or
2. was started from wild or cultivated seeds planted in a wild forest habitat and not nurtured or manipulated in any way prior to harvest.

All other American ginseng is "Cultivated ginseng" and is regulated by the Cultivated Ginseng Program (608-224-5116) of the WI Dept. of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection.

Wild Ginseng Regulations. Wisconsin law regulates the harvest of and engaging in business with wild ginseng in the state and its shipment/transport out of and into the state. This publication summarizes the main points of Wisconsin's wild ginseng laws. For Wisconsin's complete wild ginseng laws, consult [s. 29.611](#), Stats., and [ch. NR 28, Wis. Adm. Code](#).

HARVESTING WILD GINSENG

License Requirements. No person may harvest (cut, root up, gather, carry away or destroy) wild ginseng unless the person has a valid wild ginseng harvest license issued by the Department of Natural Resources (department). *Except: a license is not required for a person who harvests wild ginseng growing on the person's own land if the ginseng is not sold.* "Own land" means ownership interest in property by deed or land contract.

Harvesters Must:

- have a valid wild ginseng harvest license in their possession at the time of harvest and sale;
- show the license to Conservation Wardens upon request, and display it to wild ginseng dealers when selling their ginseng.

Harvest Licenses are available at DNR License Sales Agents and online at dnr.wi.gov. License costs per harvest season are:

- \$15.75 for Wisconsin residents,
- \$30.75 for non-residents.

Harvest Season: September 1 - November 1, both dates inclusive. No person may, between November 1 and the following September 1, cut, root up, gather, or destroy wild ginseng.

Where to Harvest. Persons possessing a valid wild ginseng harvest license may harvest wild ginseng on:

- private lands only with the permission of the landowner. Also, no person may harvest wild ginseng on properties enrolled in MFL or VPA programs without the landowner's permission.
- public lands only with the permission of the public land manager. Note below where harvest is prohibited.

Harvest of Ginseng is Prohibited on:

- any State-owned or administered land.
- most lands managed by federal, county, or local units of government; contact the applicable property manager for detailed regulations.

All Tribes have their own tribal laws and agreements with the state. Check with tribal entities for applicable harvest regulations.

Plant Size Restriction. Plants may be harvested only if they possess 3 or more true leaves (prongs) *and* a flower/fruit stalk. The entire stalk, minus mature berries, shall be kept with the plant until they are taken to the harvester's home or place of business.



3 true leaves,
5 leaflets each.

Eric P. Burkhardt

Seed Planting Requirement. Harvesters must plant all seeds from harvested plants in the vicinity of the parent plants in a manner which will encourage germination and growth (Squeeze seeds from red berries and plant them about 12 inches apart and one inch deep in loose soil. Cover with leaf litter). Wild seed may not be transported away from the site of the parent plant.

Sales by WI wild ginseng harvest licensees.

A valid harvest license allows for wild ginseng that was lawfully harvested by the licensee to be sold by the licensee to a licensed Wisconsin wild ginseng dealer from September 1 to March 31, both dates inclusive.

Note: Harvesters planning on having wild ginseng in their possession after March 31 must have their ginseng inspected and be issued a Certificate of Origin by the department by March 31 following harvest for such ginseng to ever be eligible for international export.

SHIPPING & CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- No person may ship/transport out of this state wild ginseng that originates in this state unless the wild ginseng is accompanied by a valid Certificate of Origin issued by the department.
- No person may ship out of this state to a foreign country wild ginseng that originates in another state unless the ginseng is accompanied by a valid Certificate of Origin issued by the originating state.
- No resident may purchase for the purpose of resale wild ginseng that originates in another state unless the ginseng is accompanied by a valid Certificate of Origin from the other state.

ENGAGING IN BUSINESS WITH WILD GINSENG

License Requirements. All persons who engage in business by purchasing, selling, holding, brokering, billing or receiving payment for, contracting for or advertising either for cash or on consignment wild ginseng in Wisconsin shall have a valid Wisconsin wild ginseng **dealer license in their own name**. *Paid employees or family members of a licensed dealer who are working at the primary place of business for that dealer will be covered by the licensed dealer.*

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ENGAGING IN BUSINESS WITH WILD GINSENG cont.

Dealer licenses are valid July 1 to June 30. They are available through DNR Customer and Outreach Services (1-888-936-7463).

Dealer License Options:

- **Resident Class A (\$100)** - for transactions up to 100 dry pounds in a license year.
- **Resident Class B (\$500)** - for transactions up to 1,000 dry pounds in a license year.
- **Resident Class C (\$1000)** - for transactions of unlimited amounts in a license year.
- **Non-resident (\$1000)** for transactions of unlimited amounts in a license year.

Dealers may purchase Wisconsin wild ginseng only from licensed harvesters or licensed dealers and must inspect the seller's license when purchasing. Dealers are responsible for ensuring that wild ginseng they purchase was legally harvested. Caution is recommended if purchasing **green ginseng** between November 1 and the following September 1 due to greater risk of purchasing illegally obtained wild ginseng. Ginseng that law enforcement deems illegally obtained may be subject to seizure.

Records & Reports. Each dealer must keep a complete and accurate record of each wild ginseng shipment and transaction (purchase, sale, gift, exchange...) All records, annual reports and inventory reports must be: on forms provided by the department; submitted as requested; and retained by dealers for at least 3 years.

Additional Shipping Requirements.

- If a dealer who is a resident receives wild ginseng that originated in another state without an accompanying Certificate of Origin, the dealer shall return the ginseng to the sender within 30 days after its receipt.
- Dealers are responsible for ensuring that all roots sold for export as wild ginseng are indeed wild, are 5 years of age or older, and were legally harvested. Shipments are subject to inspection at port of export. Shipments deemed illegal or without proper documentation may be seized and enforcement action may be taken.

For more information contact:

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Bureau of Law Enforcement
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Wisconsin's Wild Ginseng Program
(dnr.wi.gov, keyword "ginseng")

608-438-5496

Wisconsin's complete wild ginseng laws:
[s. 29.611, Stats.](#), and [ch. NR 28, Wis. Adm. Code.](#)

Report Suspected Violations

1-800-TIP-WDNR (1-800-847-9367)

Call or Text • 24-Hour • Confidential

For International Shipments:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service International Affairs
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041
(800) 358-2104

<https://www.fws.gov/international/>



The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240. The Department of Natural Resources is committed to serving people with disabilities. If you need this information in an alternative format, call 608-267-2772.



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