

## **American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) in the Eastern Region of the Forest Service**



Once more common in rich hardwood forests than it is today, ginseng is sought for the high prices the root brings as a herbal remedy. Some feel the practice of gathering older plants and replanting the bright red berries will help sustain the plant while others raise concern over the viability due to over harvest.

Ginseng is designated as a Regional Forester Sensitive Species on the Chequamegon /Nicolet (Wisconsin), Ottawa and Huron Manistee (Michigan), Midewin Tall Grass Prairie and Shawnee (Illinois), Hoosier (Indiana) and White (Maine/New Hampshire) and Green Mountain (Vermont) National Forests. Very few sites remain on forests that have designated ginseng as sensitive. The plant cannot be harvested on these National Forests except as provided for in tribal agreements or research collection permits.

The plant is also documented as occurring (but is not designated as RFSS) on the Mark Twain Missouri), Wayne (Ohio), Monongehela (West Virginia) and Allegheny (Pennsylvania) National Forests.

The Fish and Wildlife Service ([www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)) has requested that the Office of Management Authority place a condition on the granting of permits for wild American ginseng; only those plants at least five years of age will be legally permitted if harvested from the wild. The restriction is due to findings that indicate a viability concern. Accordingly, the Eastern Region of the Forest Service limits any collection or harvesting of wild American ginseng on National Forest system lands where it is not designated as sensitive to plants at least five years of age.

The Eastern Region would like to draft a Conservation Assessment for ginseng and welcomes partners and species experts in this effort.