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HOME GROWN FACTS

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AMERICAN GINSENG AND GOLDENSEAL FOREST BOTANICALS

Background

Collecting forest plants for medicines, flavoring, or nutrition is one of the oldest uses of forests. Now, forest owners can grow their own medicinal plants, or on a larger scale, supply quantities to herbalists and other buyers. Before growing forest botanicals for sale, you should first learn about and respect the underlying rationale for utilizing forest herbs. If you are skeptical of herbal remedies, it will be difficult for you to market the crop you grow. As with any specialty product, knowledge of how an herb is prepared and used properly is key.

For example, pale jewelweed (*Impatiens pallida*) grows in moist forests and can be used to relieve skin irritations from nettle and poison ivy. If you were propagating it for sale, what questions could you answer about it?

Populations of forest botanicals are very fragile and take years to establish. If you are interested in growing crops like wild-simulated American ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) or goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*), you will be getting into it for years to come. It often takes 5 - 10 years to produce the first crop, and that's only with diligent care during the intervening years.

American Ginseng

The potential market for wild-simulated American ginseng is strong. This market is primarily in Asia, although more and more domestic markets are emerging. Forest conditions in the Central Southern Tier of New York are quite good for cultivating American ginseng.

Our plan is to educate New York forest owners about the value of "wild-simulated" ginseng, compared to "field-cultivated" ginseng, which is done under very expensive, artificial conditions. Wild simulated ginseng carries a much higher value than ginseng grown through other systems. It requires an appropriate forest site, a diligent and educated forest owner, and \$100 - \$800 in seeds and rootlets.



American Ginseng

Goldenseal



Goldenseal

Although American ginseng is the most often cited example of forest botanical farming, goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*) can also be farmed for a profit in Southern Tier forests. Herbalists use the leaves and roots of goldenseal for a variety of medicinal purposes such as an anti-inflammatory and to boost the effects of other herbal remedies.

Your forest may be suitable for goldenseal production if you have moderate shade, dark & rich well-drained soils, and a good population of plants that grow in similar conditions - mayapple, bloodroot, and trillium for example. Goldenseal is usually planted as a rhizome (a thick root), which can be purchased from forest botanical suppliers. After developing flowers and then seeds, goldenseal is propagated to a sustainable abundance.

Helping You Put Knowledge to Work

Unlike ginseng, goldenseal reaches its most marketable state in four or five years. As it ages, the quality declines. However, older plants that produce abundant seeds can be a good source of a sustainable crop.

You might enjoy growing and using your own goldenseal, with a doctor's approval. If you want to sell goldenseal, you will need to investigate potential buyers yourself. Look for classified ads in homesteading and rural life publications, check with local herbalists, or consult networks of people who use herbal remedies

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Source: <http://scnyat.cce.cornell.edu/forestfarming/botanicals.htm>