



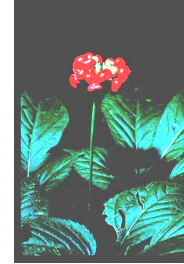
# NATIONAL FORESTS IN NORTH • CAROLINA

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## NEWS • RELEASE

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### Forest Service Announces New Ginseng Tagging Program

Asheville.... The Forest Service announced today they have tagged ginseng with a special dye in national forest wilderness areas, where it is illegal to collect the plant. The marking system includes a microchip that indicates the location of the plants. Using this new technology, the Forest Service hopes to curtail illegal collection in wilderness and special interest areas.

The agency is cooperating with the State of North Carolina Plant Protection Program, which regulates ginseng for North Carolina. Already, the Great Smoky Mountain National Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway have used this marking system to stop poaching of these valuable plants.

The Forest Service permits the collection of ginseng –but not in wilderness or special interest areas. Recent monitoring of ginseng populations in wilderness areas indicates a predominance of young individuals, which suggests the older plants are being harvested illegally. Ginseng, popular for its purported medicinal values, has been gathered from the mountains of North Carolina for nearly two hundred years. Once common, mature ginseng plants have become increasingly scarce across their native range.

“We appreciate the efforts of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and our own Forest Service botanists for helping the conservation of this medicinal plant,” said Larry Hayden, Ecosystem Management and Planning Staff Officer for the National Forests in North Carolina. “They have worked long hours in rugged terrain to deter illegal collection of ginseng.”

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