



NDF WORKSHOP
WG 2 – Perennials
CASE STUDY 5 SUMMARY
Panax quinquefolius
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PANAX QUINQUEFOLIUS (AMERICAN GINSENG) IN CANADA: A CASE STUDY

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Ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*) is an herbaceous, long-lived forest perennial with slow population growth and is considered to have poor dispersal efficiency. Plants take approximately five to eight years to mature, at which time they proliferate exclusively via sexual reproduction. Seed recruitment is low due to high levels of seed predation and high seed mortality rates (~70-90%).

Ginseng is widely distributed in eastern North America and occurs frequently within the major portions of its range (i.e. the Appalachia and the Ozark regions of the United States). However in Canada, ginseng occurs in low abundance with its occurrence infrequent and fragmented throughout its range. Only 49 of 418 recorded populations are considered viable and at least 369 of the 418 known populations are either extirpated, unviable, or in decline. The global and Canadian trend of ginseng is decreasing. Ginseng is considered endangered in Canada both nationally and in its provincial jurisdictions of Ontario and Québec; national and provincial legislation is in place which affords protection to wild ginseng populations.

Primary threats to ginseng are harvest and logging activities and, to a lesser extent, habitat loss/degradation/alteration and recreation. Threats to ginseng in Canada are severe and harvest is considered unsustainable. Harvest and trade (including international exports) of Canadian wild ginseng

is prohibited. The prohibitions on harvest and trade of wild ginseng aim to conserve the remaining populations and enable population regeneration.

Growth rates, harvesting impacts, and a minimum viable population size for Canadian ginseng have been calculated using population matrix models. Annual population surveys are conducted and compared to baseline data to monitor illegal harvest and identify any additional threats to populations.

Wildlife managers, in collaboration with species experts in the provincial jurisdictions, are responsible for the management of wild ginseng in Canada. The Scientific Authority relies on these managers/experts to provide it with up-to-date information on wild ginseng populations primarily in the form of the IUCN Checklist for Non-Detriment Findings, but also via consultations, when making an NDF.