



NDF WORKSHOP
WG 2 – Perennials
CASE STUDY 6 SUMMARY
Panax quinquefolius
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THE YIN AND THE YANG OF GINSENG – MAKING A NON-DETRIMENT FINDING FOR *PANAX QUINQUEFOLIUS*: A CASE STUDY WITH TWO PERSPECTIVES (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND CANADA).

AUTHOR

Patricia Ford

Panax quinquefolius L. (family Araliaceae), common names include American ginseng and Canadian ginseng, is endemic to eastern North America, from southern Canada south to the United States of America. The species is a slow-growing, long-lived herbaceous perennial geophyte found in mid- to late-successional deciduous forests. The roots of plants are harvested, thus killing the plant.

The root of *P. quinquefolius* closely resembles the root of the Asian species, *Panax ginseng*, which has been used in traditional medicine for perhaps 5000 years. Following the discovery of *P. quinquefolius* in 1716 in Canada, large volumes of roots were harvested and shipped to China. By the mid 1700s as plants became increasingly scarce in Canada, the harvest shifted south to the American colonies, what is now the United States of America. In 1975, *P. quinquefolius* was listed on Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In addition to whole live or dead specimens, the annotation includes whole and sliced roots and parts of roots.

Approximately 90–95% of the wild roots of *P. quinquefolius* harvested in the United States are exported to East Asia, primarily Hong Kong. To ensure that the harvest does not impact the long-term viability of the species, in 1999 the U.S. CITES Scientific Authority determined that only wild roots of 5 years of age or older can be exported. As a result of the age-based restriction on the export of roots, exports decrease by 14,615 kgs (32,221 lbs) (based on 5-year averages).

In United States of America, the management and conservation of native species is the responsibility of the States. To be approved for export of *P. quinquefolius*, a State must provide to the U.S. CITES Authorities documentation that its management program is designed to monitor and protect populations of *P. quinquefolius* from over-harvest. Currently, 19 States of the 34 States within the range of the species are approved for the export of wild-harvested roots.

The 19 States regulate the harvest and sale of roots within their respective jurisdictions. Harvested roots must be certified by State Government officials and

harvesters and buyers must meet certain State licensing and reporting requirements.

States approved for the export of roots of *P. quinquefolius* must annually submit to the U.S. CITES Authorities a report with detailed information on the previous harvest season and any changes to the State regulatory procedures. State reports include status information on *P. quinquefolius* that is used by the U.S. Scientific Authority in making its non-detriment finding. The U.S. Scientific Authority makes a programmatic non-detriment finding on a State-by-State basis, rather than requiring individual applicants to provide the information on a permit-by-permit basis. In United States, we have found that information exchange and cooperation among stakeholders, government entities, non-governmental organizations, and researchers is essential to share information on the biology and trade status of the species in order to maintain self-sustaining populations and make scientifically based non-detriment findings.