

# Visual Site Assessment and Grading Criteria for Growing Wild-simulated Ginseng

## Score

Select only one choice for each category.  
40 to 60 points: excellent site  
30 to 40 points: potentially good site  
20 to 30 points: marginal site, do complete soil test  
Less than 20 points: poor site, look elsewhere

## B. Exposure (orientation)

1. North, east, or northeast facing.....5 points
2. South, southeast, or northwest facing.....2 points
3. West or southwest.....0 points

Western or southern facing slopes can be problematic if in low elevations due to temperature differences.

## C. Slope

1. 10% to 25% .....5 points
2. Level to 10%.....2 points
3. Greater than 25%.....0 points

- Ginseng will grow on very extreme slopes but unless you are part Billy Goat you will not want to try to work on slopes greater than 25%
- Hilly areas with slight to moderate slope will allow for good drainage.
- Depressions or low spots that might hold water for any length of time should be avoided

## D. Soil Characteristics

1. Few stones, 75% plantable.....10 points
2. Moderate, small stones (50 to 75% plantable).....8 points
3. Very Stony, 25% to 50%.....5 points
4. Large rock outcrops, boulders, less than 25% plantable soil ..3 points
5. Soil too rocky to stick a pole in.....0 points

- Walk the site carrying a four foot long pointed stick
- Every few steps jam the stick into the ground
- If you hit nothing but soil to a depth of six inches, three out of four times, it is 75% plantable.
- If you hit soil half the time it is 50% plantable etc.

## REFERENCES

Bob Beyfuss. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Greene County

## A. Dominant Tree Species

Ginseng requires a minimum of 65% shade, with 78% being the optimal over most soil types.  
Dominant species: 50% or more of large trees present.



Sugar Maple.....10 points  
Big Sugar Maple (diameter over 24 inches)...15 points



Evergreens.....0 point



White Ash, Butternut, Basswood..... 8 points



Tulip tree and black birch.....6 points



Oaks and Cherry.....5 points



Aspen and Hop Hornbeam (ironwood).....3 points

## F. Security

1. Very Close to occupied, full time residence of potential grower within easy viewing of residence.....10 points
2. Forested Land within 100 yards of grower's property, patrolled regularly.....8 points
3. Surveillance camera installed .....6 points
4. Remote woodlot within one quarter mile patrolled regularly .....3 points
5. Non-resident grower, weekend visitor .....0 point

## E. Herbaceous Plants



1. Reproducing population of healthy wild ginseng is, by far, the best indicator plant.....15 points
2. Sparse populations of wild ginseng .....10 points



3. Maidenhair fern and rattlesnake fern .....8 points



4. Red or white baneberry, Blue cohosh and Xmas fern... 6 points



5. Bloodroot, Foamflower, Trillium .....5 points



6. False Solomon's Seal and Mayapple .....5 points



7. Sarsaparilla and Lady's slipper .....3 points