

**Visual Site Assessment & Grading Criteria  
for Potential Woodland Ginseng Growing  
Operation for a Mid Atlantic Forest**

Circle only one choice for each category

<b>CATEGORY A</b> - Dominant tree species (50% or more of mature trees)	<i>Points</i>
1. Sugar maple, Tulip Poplar, Black Walnut (add additional 5 points more if average circumference is greater than 60 inches)	10
2. Basswood, pignut hickory, Magnolia (add additional 4 points more if average circumference is greater than 60 inches)	7
3. White Oak, shagbark hickory, pawpaw, buckeye, sassafras, black cherry, beech, sycamore	5
4. Mixed conifers (pine, hemlock, spruce) with hardwoods, birches, ironwood, musclewood	3
5. Willows, cottonwood or all softwoods,	1
<i>Sub-Total</i>	
<b>CATEGORY B</b> - Exposure (orientation)	
1. North, East, or Northeast facing slope	5
2. Southeast	3
3. West, southwest (protected west or south facing slopes in valleys and ravines may score 3 points)	0
<i>Sub-Total</i>	
<b>CATEGORY C</b> - Slope	
1. 10% to 30% slope	5
2. Level	3
3. 45% or greater slope	0
<i>Sub-Total</i>	
<b>CATEGORY D</b> - Soil and site surface characteristics	
1. Site dominated by mostly very large trees, more than 20 inches in diameter, few surface rocks, 75% of site plantable	10
2. Site dominated by medium sized trees, 10 to 20 inches in diameter, some surface rocks, 50% plantable	8
3. Small trees less than 10 inches in diameter, very stony, 25% to 50% plantable	5

4. No large trees, saplings and shrubs dominate or large rock outcropping, many boulders, less than 25% tillable	3
5. Soil too rocky to plant anywhere, poorly drained, standing water present	0
<i>Sub-Total</i>	
<b>CATEGORY E</b> - Understory herbaceous plants (select highest scoring one only)	
1. Reproducing large (25+ plants) population of wild ginseng on site	20
2. Sparse wild ginseng	15
3. Maidenhair fern, rattlesnake fern, black cohosh, goldenseal, blue cohosh	10
4. Jack in the Pulpit, bloodroot, Dutchman's breeches, bedstraw, wood nettle	8
5. Mayapple, True or false Solomon's Seal, Trilliums, Virginia creeper, Xmas fern, ramps, Sweet cicely, jewelweed, plantain leafed sedge, white snakeroot, foam flower, white snakeroot	6
6. Wild sarsaparilla, sensitive fern, wild geranium,	4
7. Club (fir) moss, princess pine, bunchberry, grasses, skunk cabbage, hellebore	0
<i>Sub-Total</i>	
<b>CATEGORY F</b> - Security	
1. Very close to full-time residence of potential grower, with planting site within easy viewing of residence (noisy, outside dogs housed nearby 24/7 add 5 bonus points)	15
2. Forested land less than 440 yards(one quarter mile) from grower's residence, patrolled regularly	8
3. Regularly patrolled woodlot within one mile of residence	5
4. Non-resident grower or remote woodlot not patrolled	0
<i>Sub-Total</i>	
<b>Total Score (add points from each category's sub-total):</b>	

**Results:**

50 points or above	Excellent site, great potential
40 to 50 points	Good site
30 to 40 points	Fair site, test soil
Less than 30 points	Poor site, look elsewhere

*Prepared by Bob Beyfuss, Retired NY State Ginseng Specialist for Cornell University Cooperative Extension  
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