

COMMODITY

GINSENG

Description

Ginseng has been grown in Asia for at least 3,000 years, but is relatively new to BC. The first crop was planted in 1982. British Columbia's interior is particularly well suited to ginseng production. Its dry climate reduces the risk of fungal and other diseases that plague ginseng growers in other parts of the world. Ginseng is grown in the Fraser and Thompson River valleys and the Okanagan.

Ginseng is an expensive business to operate and requires different cultural methods than traditional agricultural crops. Ginseng must be shaded from direct sunlight so growers build special shade canopies which cover crops throughout the growing season. Mulch is used for weed control and winter protection. As with other agricultural crops, ginseng requires irrigation. Special equipment is required to plant, tend and harvest ginseng. It takes at least three years to produce a harvestable ginseng root. Roots are stacked on trays and dried using forced warm air, then they are stored in a cool, dry place. About 90% of BC's ginseng is exported to Asia.

Ginseng is classed as a food crop by Health Canada. It would only be considered a drug if specific claims were made. Ginseng can be used whole, sliced, powdered, or as an extract. It can be made into tea, candy, capsules or tablets. Several value-added processing businesses are starting up in BC.

Farm Practices of Particular Interest

Practices for specific farm activities can be found in the Farm Practice section of this reference guide. Farm practices that are of particular interest to ginseng production include:

Crop Protection

Ginseng requires shading materials to protect it from direct sunlight. Shading is required from the spring until the early fall. Ginseng needs to be protected from pests. Registered pest control chemicals may be used, provided they are used in accordance with information on the label. Label information is part of federal regulations for pest control.

See Farm Practice: [Pesticides](#)
[Pest Management](#)
[Weed Control](#)

Machinery Operation

Site preparation, seedbed forming, pesticide application and harvesting operations are timed according to the weather, production cycles, pest management requirements and crop quality. Farm machinery may operate 24 hours a day.

See Farm Practice: [Mobile Equipment](#)

On-Farm Cooling, Washing and Drying, Grading, Packaging and Storage of Produce

Farmers wash, dry, grade, package and store ginseng on their farms. These operations may go on 24 hours a day and may require the operation of compressors, conveyors, washing machines, grading lines and other equipment. Farmers may process ginseng and sell roots and processed products directly to customers from their farm. Custom work or shared ownership of machinery is common.

See Farm Practice: [Direct Farm Marketing](#)
[Product Processing](#)
[Stationary Equipment](#)

Transportation

Ginseng producers may have vehicles making deliveries and hauling products away 24 hours a day. They should, however, supply adequate areas on the farm property to handle the volume, movement, and parking of trucks and other traffic related to the activities and production of the farm.

See Farm Practice: [Transportation](#)

Legislation

Agricultural producers are expected to follow all legislation that pertains to their farming operation. The *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* stipulates that the farm operation must meet the *Health Act*, *Pesticide Control Act*, *Waste Management Act* and the regulations under those acts. Information on federal and provincial legislation can be found in Appendices B and C.

Acts that pertain to specific farm activities are listed in the farm practices section of this reference guide. Local government bylaws may also apply to some farm practices. Acts that are not referenced elsewhere that are of special interest to ginseng producers include the following:

Federal

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species – restricts trade in wild ginseng to protect the endangered plant.

Publications

Publications that provide information on ginseng production include, but are not limited to, the following (refer to Appendix D for details):

Ginseng Production Guide for Commercial Growers