

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

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(Original by Bob Beyfuss, Cornell Cooperative Extension Ginseng Specialist)

Circle only one choice for each category

CATEGORY A - Dominant tree species (50% or more of mature trees)	<i>Points</i>
1. Sugar maple (add additional 5 points more if average circumference is greater than 60 inches, add 2 additional points if there is a presence of butternut)	10
2. White ash, basswood or black walnut (add additional 4 points more if average circumference is greater than 60 inches, add 2 additional points if there is a presence of butternut)	8
3. Mixed hardwoods consisting of beech, black cherry, red maple, white ash, red oak, basswood and some sugar maple	5
4. Mixed hardwoods as above plus some yellow birch, hemlock and/or white or red pine	5
5. Red and/or white oak	3
6. Ironwood, white birch, aspen	1
7. All softwoods, pine, hemlock, spruce, fir	0
<i>Sub-Total</i>	
CATEGORY B - Exposure (orientation)	
1. North, east, or northeast facing	5
2. South, southeast, northwest	2
3. West, southwest	0
<i>Sub-Total</i>	
CATEGORY C - Slope	
1. 10% to 25% slope	5
2. Level	3
3. 25% or greater slope	0
<i>Sub-Total</i>	
CATEGORY D - Soil and site surface characteristics	
1. Site dominated by mostly very large trees more than 20 inches in diameter or few surface rocks, 75% of site plantable	10
2. Site dominated by medium sized trees, 10 to 20 inches in diameter or 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 or poorly drained, standing water present	0
<i>Sub-Total</i>	
CATEGORY E - Understory plants (select highest scoring one only)	
1. Reproducing population of wild ginseng	15
2. Sparse wild ginseng	10
3. Maidenhair fern or rattlesnake fern or red or white baneberry	8
4. Christmas fern, or blue cohosh or red berried elderberry, spicebush, stinging nettles	6
5. Jack-in-the-Pulpit, other ferns, trillium, bloodroot, jewelweed, mayapple, herb Robert (a type of wild geranium), True or false Solomon's Seal	5
6. Wild sarsaparilla, Virginia creeper, ground nut, yellow lady's slipper, hepatica	3
7. Club moss, princess pine, bunchberry, garlic mustard, pink lady's slipper	0
8. Woody shrubs such as honeysuckle, witchhazel, barberry, maple leaf viburnum, Arrowwood, shrubby dogwoods, alder, lowbush or highbush blueberry	0
<i>Sub-Total</i>	
CATEGORY F – Security	
1. Very close to full-time residence of potential grower, with planting site within easy viewing of residence (noisy, outside dogs housed nearby add 5 points)	10
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	3
4. Non-resident grower or remote woodlot	0
<i>Sub-Total</i>	
Total Score (add points from each category's sub-total):	

Results:

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

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