

Enforcement efforts target American ginseng



Protecting the endangered plant species American ginseng was the focus of recent enforcement efforts in central Ontario. Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry conservation officers from the Bancroft Enforcement Unit, the Regional Ginseng Task Team, and the provincial Intelligence and Investigations Section, recently conducted patrols in Hastings County. Officers were checking for compliance with the Endangered Species Act, under which it is illegal to harvest or trade in American ginseng. The plant grows in the wild in central Ontario.

Officers seized 281 freshly harvested American ginseng roots in one investigation. In a separate investigation, they seized 587 American ginseng roots that were being trafficked, along with \$7,680 in cash.

American ginseng is a perennial herb that is highly valued by some for medicinal purposes. As many people believe wild American ginseng is more potent than farmed ginseng, the wild plant has a higher market value than farmed ginseng roots. American ginseng is listed as endangered on the Species at Risk in Ontario list.

To report a natural resources violation, call the MNRF TIPS line at 1-877-847-7667 toll-free any time or contact your local ministry office during regular business hours. You can also call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

Submitted by the MNR