

## Goldenseal (*Hydrastis canadensis*)



**Names:** Goldenseal, Yellowroot, Yellow Puccoon, Turmeric Root, Eye Balm, Ground Raspberry. Another medicinal species *Xanthorhiza simplicissima* is also known by the common name Yellowroot.

**Description:** Goldenseal is an herbaceous perennial with bright yellow roots growing out of a thicker rhizome. Leaves are doubly serrated, palm-shaped, and have 5 to 7 lobes. Younger plants usually have only one leaf, while a fork with two leaves is more common on mature plants. A single, small white flower blooms in April or May as the leaves are unfolding. Its red, berry-like fruit develops by mid to late summer. Goldenseal can also spread through its rhizome, forming dense colonies.

**Range and Habitat:** Goldenseal is found in moist rich soils often in north facing coves and stream valleys. It is most commonly associated with the center of its range, in Central Appalachia and the Ohio River Valley.



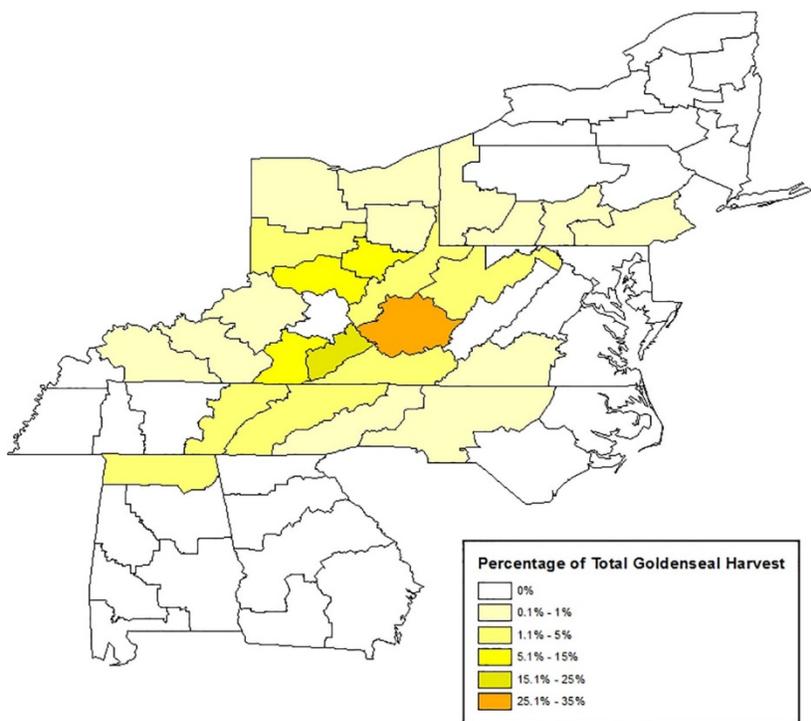
**Uses:** The roots and the tops of goldenseal are used for treating digestive problems, stomach aches, mouth sores, eye and ear infections, and as a tonic and antiseptic. It has antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. Goldenseal is considered a “synergistic” herb, meaning it intensifies the effect of other medicinal plants, so it is often found in formulas with other products like Echinacea. Native Americans also used the roots to make yellow dye.

**Price:** Average Paid to Harvesters in 2014: Dry \$22.09 Wet \$6.85

**Trade Volume:** Goldenseal was the most commonly purchased of the other plants bought by ginseng dealers. 86 percent of ginseng dealers who purchased other plants and 31 percent of all ginseng dealers reported buying it. It ranked third in weight sold, after black cohosh and slippery elm bark. We are still preparing our total output estimates, but in a 2010 survey, members of the American Herbal Product Association purchased over 75,000 pounds of goldenseal, of which over 59,000 was harvested from the wild.

**Trade Distribution:** The majority of goldenseal reported in 2014 came from southern West Virginia, east Kentucky and southern Ohio, but smaller amounts of the plant were harvested throughout the study area. We expect some harvest to occur in the new areas being added to the survey in 2016.

Reported 2014 Goldenseal Harvest Distribution



**Stewardship and cultivation:** Like all roots, it is best to harvest goldenseal after the seed has set in late summer and fall, and to leave immature plants to grow. Goldenseal can re-sprout from pieces left in the ground after harvest, but seed dispersal is how new patches are formed. Even though it is abundant in some places, goldenseal has become scarce across much of its range due to habitat loss and overharvesting. Another reason to hold off on harvesting is that as the season progresses the root will be larger and have more medicinal value.

Goldenseal's price also makes it a good candidate for cultivation. Some estimates have cultivated goldenseal making up as much as 30 percent of the market. It prefers rich, well-drained soil under shade. It is easiest to plant from pieces of rhizome containing both buds and roots about that are about one half to one inch long. They are ready to harvest in 3 to 5 years. Rhizome pieces for planting are becoming easier to find, many seed and native landscaping companies now offer them. For more information on cultivating goldenseal, see our resources and references page. "Growing and Marketing Ginseng, Goldenseal and other Woodland Medicinals" by Jeanine Davis and Scott Persons is another great resource for goldenseal cultivation.

#### **References:**

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