

Propagating 'At-risk' Medicinal Woodland Plants

Common name	Scientific Name	Plant notes	Flower	Fruit and Seed	Seed notes
American Ginseng	<i>Panax quinquefolius</i>	East or north facing slopes; 70% shade under sugar maple ideal Moist but well-drained; susceptible to phytophthora root rot & other fungal diseases; especially when planted densely Protect from deer; berry clusters from chipmunks & mice Unhappy in containers. Cannot be propagated by division	Spring	Red when ripe; start checking in late August Remove pulp from berries Sow immediately or fridge	Two years to germinate Seeds & rootlets widely available "Floaters" are not viable
Black Cohosh	<i>Actaea racemosa</i>	One or two garden plants will provide enough seeds for a propagation program; formerly in the genus <i>Cimicifuga</i> ; does well in containers Can be propagated by division	Summer	Held in dry capsules Collect when capsule splits open, late Summer	Sow immediately & you may get germination the following year
Bloodroot	<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>	Tolerates a fair amount of sun and dryness; extremely easy from seed Can be propagated by division, but divisions susceptible to rot Unhappy in containers	Spring	late Spring; harvest just before pod splits Seeds should be brown or turning brown	Harvested by ants for fleshy elaiosome Sow immediately
Blue Cohosh	<i>Caulophyllum thalictroides</i>	Slow-growing; not happy in sun Divisions might be worthwhile – even small root pieces with no visible bud will eventually develop	Spring	late Summer Little pulp – remove by hand; Sow immediately	Large fruit easy to find & collect Seed germinates second or third spring after sowing
Goldenseal	<i>Hydrastis canadensis</i>	Like almost all the plants on this list, prefers rich, moist loamy soil with good air and water drainage; May also be propagated by rhizome divisions and layering of root runners	Spring	Summer Protect from rodents	Each fruit has many seeds; process in blender Sow immediately or fridge
Lady's-slipper Orchids	<i>Cypripedium</i> spp.	Fairly challenging to grow; propagation by seed virtually impossible using conventional methods; laboratory-grown seedlings available but expensive; Large rhizomes may be divided, one bud per division			
Trilliums	<i>Trillium</i> spp.	Two local species: Purple Trillium or Beth Root (<i>Trillium erectum</i>) and Painted Trillium (<i>T. undulatum</i>); Painted Trillium is a boreal plant and much more difficult to grow requiring cool, shady moist conditions Difficult to get fruit production on non-local species	Spring	late Summer Sow immediately or fridge	Each fruit has many seeds; process in blender Very slow from seed

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Mayapple	<i>Podophyllum peltatum</i>	All parts except the ripe fruit are poisonous; leaves contain an anti-tumor compound; Probably easier by division then seed	Spring	Summer Sow immediately?	Each fruit has many seeds; extract by hand then ferment for a period to remove pulp
Spikenard	<i>Aralia racemosa</i>	Big, bold ginseng relative	Summer	Fall Sow immediately or fridge	Watch for fungal growth on berries; if present bleach before sowing
Wild Ginger	<i>Asarum canadense</i>	Easy to grow deciduous groundcover; may be propagated by rhizome cuttings but easy and fast from seed	Spring	Leathery seed capsule directly from flower Sow immediately	Check capsule frequently & harvest when seed turns brown
Ramps or Wild Leek	<i>Allium tricoccum</i>	Ephemeral; foliage appears in spring, then disappears, then a flower stalk appears; mark the spot where plants occur or you may not be able to find seeds in fall; plants don't flower every year	Summer	late Summer to Fall Harvest as early as possible; Dry storage ok	Sow immediately & you may get germination the following year