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

Circle only one choice for each category

CATEGORY A - Dominant tree species (50% or more of mature trees)	*Points*
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) * in areas south of New York, tulip poplar is equivalent in value to sugar maple as an indicator tree species	10
2. White ash 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	5
4. Mixed hardwoods as above plus some hemlock and/or white pine	5
5. Red and/or white oak	3
6. Ironwood, birch, aspen	1
7. All softwoods, pine, hemlock, spruce, fir	0
Sub-Total	
CATEGORY B - Exposure (orientation)	
1. North, east, or northeast facing	5
2. South, southeast, northwest	2
3. West, southwest	0
Sub-Total	
CATEGORY C – Slope	
1. 10% to 25% slope	5
2. Level	3
3. 30% or greater slope	0
Sub-Total	
CATEGORY D - Soil and site surface characteristics	
1. Site dominated by mostly very large trees more than 20 inches in diameter, few surface rocks, 75% of site plantable	10
2. Site dominated by medium sized trees, 10 to 20 inches in diameter, 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, poorly drained, standing water present	0
Sub-Total	
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 or foamflower or stinging nettles	6
5. Jack-in-the-Pulpit, other ferns, trillium, bloodroot* (bloodroot is a much higher scoring indicator plant south of New York), 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, Mountain Laurel, witchhazel, barberry, maple leaf viburnum, Arrowwood, shrubby dogwoods, alder, lowbush or highbush blueberry, spicebush* (spicebush is often found with wild ginseng in Southern or Midwestern sites and is considered a good indicator plant there)	0
Sub-Total	
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
Sub-Total	
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