



GOLDENSEAL (*Hydrastis canadensis*)

You have received two-year-old goldenseal roots. These should be planted as soon as possible after they arrive. If the roots arrive before you are ready to plant, keep them in a cool location (below 45°F/7°C), and keep the roots damp (by wrapping in a moist towel or newspaper) until they are planted.

Goldenseal is a single-stalked woodland plant that has thick, knotted, intensely yellow roots, and deeply-lobed leaves. It has greenish-white solitary flowers, and bears an inedible raspberry-like fruit. The dried rootstock is highly valued as a medicinal herb for its astringent properties.

LIFE CYCLE:

Perennial in Zones 5–8.

LIGHT/SOIL REQUIREMENTS:

Goldenseal grows best in its natural habitat under a hardwood canopy with at least 75% shade, provided preferably of oak, maple, sycamore, or basswood trees. Avoid pine, spruce, hemlock, red cedar, and other conifers due to their shallow root systems, which compete with goldenseal for nutrients. You can also use artificial shade if you prefer to grow the plant as a row crop. A system that works well is wood lath or slat shade frames erected over the beds and supported by a framework of strong poles tall enough to walk under. The laths or slats are nailed so that about $\frac{2}{3}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ of the direct sunlight is prevented from reaching the plants. In certain home garden situations, you can also plant goldenseal close to the shady north side of the house.

Goldenseal prefers a light loam soil that has high humus content and a pH of 5.5–6.5. Work the beds 6 inches deep, raising the center of the beds to prevent water from collecting around the plants. Amend heavy or clay soils with leaf mold (rotting hardwood tree leaves) or well-decomposed compost to lighten the soil and improve the drainage. Good drainage is critical to ensure healthy goldenseal plants.

CULTURE:

Root size may vary and larger roots can be cut or broken into smaller pieces for planting. Any piece with a bud or eye and a few strands of fibrous roots should produce a plant. Plant spacing depends on how long you intend to leave plants in the ground before harvesting. Older plants will develop larger roots and require more space.

Harvest	In-row	Between-row
After 3 years	6"	8"
After 4 years	8"	8"
More than 4 years	8"	10"

Cover the rootstock with 2 inches of soil. Keep well-weeded, but take care in weeding around young plants to avoid disturbing the roots. Once goldenseal is well established, apply mulch to prevent weed growth.

HARVEST:

Plants grown from root divisions may be harvested after 3–5 years of growth. Harvest roots in the fall (September or October) after the tops have died back. Clean roots thoroughly by washing, being careful not to remove any rootlets. Place roots in a single layer and dry on screens in a warm, but not hot (maximum of 100°F/38°C), ventilated place that is out of direct sunlight. Expect a drying time of about 15–30 days.

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