

Overharvesting depleted aboriginal stands and the wild plant is now listed as endangered. Harvesting for export is governed by international law.

Benefits are still believed to go beyond superstition. Tentative results of scientific studies done throughout the world including some in the U.S., indicate ginseng strengthens the vitality of endocrine glands to enhance metabolism of vitamins and minerals and regulate hormonal flow.

Tests tend to support Chinese and Japanese findings that ginseng has anti-stress, anti-fatigue and anti-infective properties to strengthen general mental and physical vitality while regulating blood sugars and compensating for deficiencies in vitamins B1 and B2. Soviet studies have found ginseng helps reduce both hypo- and hyper-tension, depending on use.

Use of the root has also been said to reduce trygliceride and cholesterol levels, and reduce inflammation when applied to burns. It is also said to offer some protection against radiation.

*The Maine Ginseng Growers Association hosted "The Northern Tier Ginseng Conference, on ginseng growth and an overview of related issues on May 3-4 Rumford. For a brochure and further information about the MeGGA write Maine Ginseng Growers Association, P. O. Box 382, Andover, ME 04216.*

## FIRST PATENT ISSUED FOR A SPRUCE HYBRID\*

In this era of genetic engineering and even the cloning of mammals, scientific breakthroughs seem to be the norm rather than the exception.

Accordingly, Forgene, Inc., a biotechnology company in Rhinelander, Wisconsin, has received the first U.S. general patent for a tree.

The Super Tree is genetically-improved white spruce that can grow twice as fast as a normal spruce tree. Forgene claims that hybrids will produce pulpwood for the paper industry at 20 years instead of the current normal age of 40 years, and for lumber production at 40 instead of 80 years.

About 150 million white spruce seedlings are planted each year in the United States and Canada.

(\*reprinted from *National Woodlands*, July 1997)

## ELSEWHERE

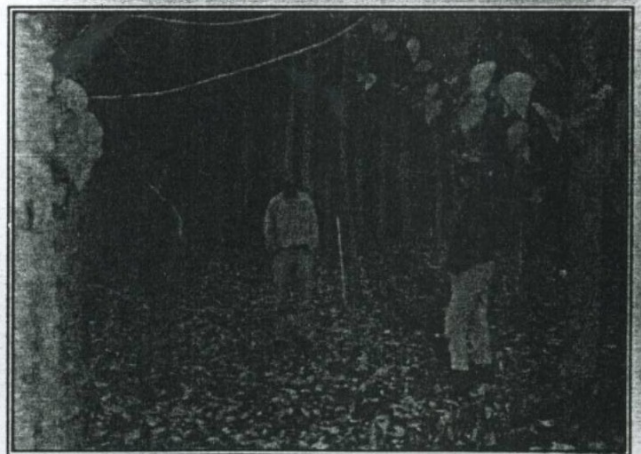
In New Hampshire, the legislature has just passed An Act modifying the definitions of "agriculture" and "farming" for certain purposes and adding definitions of "short rotation tree fiber farming" and "genetically engineered tree."

This bill allows short rotation fiber farming -- similar to Christmas tree farming, to be classified as agriculture. Short rotation farming, with planted species on rotations under fifteen years, is being considered on some idle farmland in Coos County, according to the New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association quarterly, *Timber Crier*, Spring 1997.

## YET ELSEWHERE

Boise Cascade is farming rapid-growing hybrid cottonwood - a relative of aspen - in Washington. Shown in the photo below is forester Steve Pottle, of Kennewick, WA. Steve's parents, Sandra and Jim Pottle of Perry, ME were visiting. The hybrid cottonwood that Steve is raising for Boise reaches a diameter of 12 inches (height of 80 feet) in about seven years.

The cottonwood plantations - 17,000 acres so far, with increased acreage planned, are irrigated and fertilized. Under Washington law, their short growing time allows them to be classified as an agricultural product.



7-year old cottonwood, ready to harvest