

ORGANIC CERTIFICATION FACT SHEET

USDA organic regulations include requirements for cultivated crops and wild crops. According to USDA, a wild crop is defined as any plant or portion of a plant that is collected or harvested from a site that is not maintained under cultivation or other agricultural management.

7CFR §205.207 Wild-crop harvesting practice standard.

- (a) A wild crop that is intended to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic must be harvested from a designated area that has had no prohibited substance, as set forth in §205.105, applied to it for a period of 3 years immediately preceding the harvest of the wild crop.
- (b) A wild crop must be harvested in a manner that ensures that such harvesting or gathering will not be destructive to the environment and will sustain the growth and production of the wild crop.

Evaluation of wild crops

All operations with wild crops must complete a crop producer organic system plan with details about wild harvest practices. Your organic system plan must include a description of the natural environment and any rare or endangered species within your harvest area. It must also include a description of your harvesting methods and how you ensure the crop is harvested in a sustainable manner.

Wild crops must be harvested from a site distinct from where cultivated crops are harvested. You must submit a full map of the area(s) to be harvested, defining boundaries, borders, adequate buffer zones, and point and non-point sources of contaminants.

When available, established industry standards will be used as a guide to determine the best harvest practices for a particular wild crop. Inspection of the wild harvest crops must be conducted annually, preferably during the harvest of the wild crop.

Additional Resources

NOP Guidance—Wild Crop Harvesting (NOP 5022)

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/5022.pdf>

NOP Guide for Organic Crop Producers

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/GuideForOrganicCropProducers.pdf>

Does Your Site Qualify for Wild Harvest?

Answer the following questions to determine if your practices are considered wild crop harvesting or cultivated crop production per USDA organic regulations.

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1. Is the land an abandoned lot (not a natural area) or slated for clearing?
 2. Are practices implemented to mimic a natural system, such as the use of shade cloth?
 3. Are pest control, disease control, or fertility inputs applied to the land where the crop is harvested?
 4. Is the land irrigated where crops are harvested?
 5. Are domestic livestock pastured on the area where the crop is harvested?
 6. Do you plant seeds (other than re-seeding from existing plants) or use planting stock to re-seed land where the crop is harvested?
 7. Is soil cultivated or otherwise disturbed beyond what is necessary for harvest activities where crops are harvested?
 8. Is vegetation surrounding crops trimmed or maintained; or are crops pruned at any point throughout the year—excluding what is necessary to sustain the crop and its habitat?
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If you answered **Yes** to any of these questions, the crop is considered a cultivated crop and **does not** qualify as a wild crop.

If you answered **No** to all of these questions and would like to add a wild crop to your organic certificate, please update and submit the following forms, located on our website at:

<https://agr.wa.gov/departments/organic/certified-operations/providing-updates>

1. Site application (AGR 2264)
2. Organic System Plan Section N. Wild Harvest
3. Your own map of the area to be wild harvested

Forms may be submitted via email or hard copy.
Please contact us with any questions. We are here to assist!



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