

Ginger roots: Ginger is one of the most ancient plant species grown by man; it is used for many purposes. It is believed to be native to Malaysia or India. Ginger has an excellent reputation in ancient Indian and Chinese medicine and is used frequently in Asian cuisines. Ginger is mainly produced in tropical and sub-tropical regions. The plant produces underground rhizomes, which are harvested 8-10 months after planting. Production information can be found in these websites:

<http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/horticulture/4748.html> and http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/BODY_MV067.

Hawaii is the only state in the United States that is currently commercially producing ginger. In the past, growers in Florida have attempted to grow ginger. Although the southern and central parts of Florida have good conditions for ginger production, both quality and yield were low. In recent years, a steady niche market has been developed for organic ginger. Preliminary results of research conducted in Homestead, Florida have demonstrated the production potential of ginger roots using a hydroponic system (Rafie, 2003).



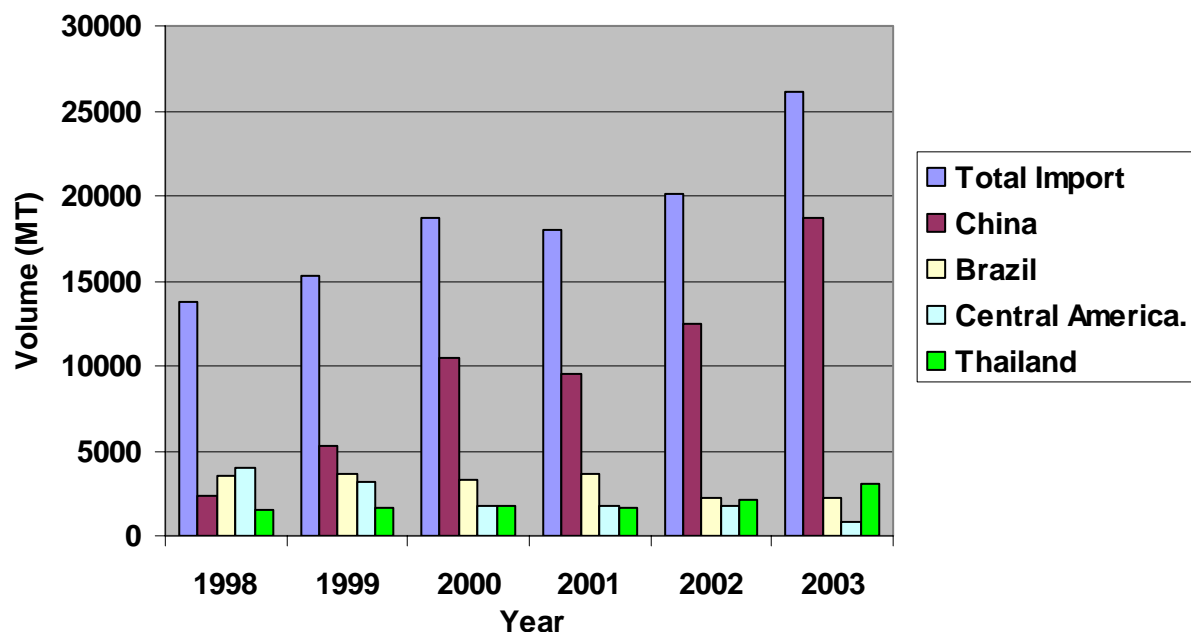
Ginger roots grown hydroponically.



Ginger plants grown hydroponically under greenhouse conditions.

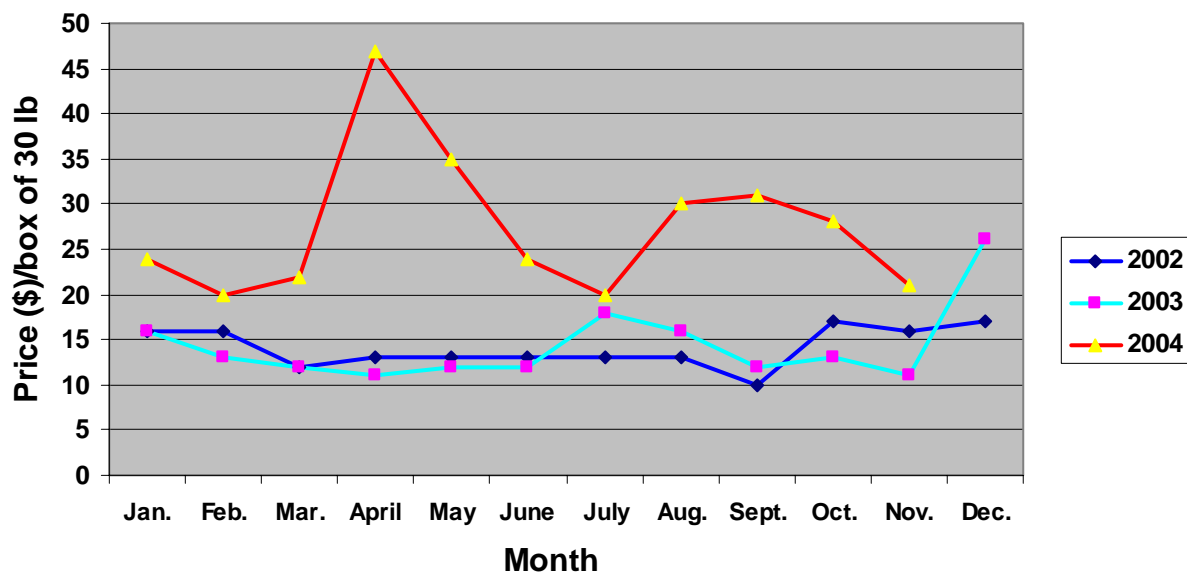
Market: Most of the demand in the United State is met by imported ginger from China, Brazil, Thailand and Central America. In 2003, The United States imported a total of 26,103 metric tons (MT) of ginger from various countries. During this period, Hawaii produced 6,545 MT of fresh ginger. Hawaiian ginger is known in the market place for better quality and is priced higher than imported ginger. The volume of imported ginger in 2003 was 23% higher than 2002. In 2003, China was the largest exporter of ginger to the United States (Figure 1). The total value of imported ginger in 2003 was \$14.3 million. This figure is expected to be much higher in the 2004. Fresh ginger is usually packed in 30 lb boxes. The market prefers fresh and large ginger roots. The price of ginger fluctuates, depending on availability. Figure 2 shows the wholesale monthly prices of fresh ginger root in the New York Terminal Market. These prices are based on the daily USDA Market News Reports. Each monthly price was calculated using the average daily prices on the 10th and the 20th of the month. The average of all months for both 2002 and 2003 were \$14.00/ 30 lb box of fresh ginger in the New York Terminal Market. In 2004, the average of all months was \$27.50/ 30 lb box of fresh ginger. Due to higher prices in the market, the 2004 growing season is considered one of the better years in terms of return to the growers.

Figure 1. Total volume of ginger imported by the U.S. from different countries and region, 1997-2003.



Source: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/USTrade/USTImHS10.asp>

Figure 2. Monthly wholesale New York Terminal Market prices for a 30 lb box ginger, 2002-2004.



Source: USDA Market News Reports

More information is available from the following:

http://www.floridata.com/ref/Z/zing_off.cfm

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/MV/MV06700.pdf>

<http://www.radajamaica.com.jm/Technical/GINGER.HTM>

Rafie, A.R. and Teresa Olczyk. 2003. Hydroponic production of fresh ginger roots (*Zingiber officinale*) as an alternative method for South Florida. *Proc. Fla. State Hort. Soc.* 116:51-52. 2003.