

# AGROFORESTRY

# AS CONSERVATION



Learn how integrating trees and shrubs with crops and livestock can help farms diversify and build resilience.

## What is Agroforestry?

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines agroforestry as the intentional integration of trees and shrubs into crop and animal farming systems to create environmental, economic, and social benefits. In combining technologies from both agriculture and forestry, these practices help build more integrated, diverse, productive, profitable, and sustainable land-use systems.

## NRCS & Agroforestry

The USDA offers financial assistance to help farmers afford to plant trees and shrubs on their land. Trees planted in windbreaks along field edges and in riparian buffers along stream edges are commonly supported practices. NRCS also offers funding for trees planted in pasture, in fields in alley cropping systems, or as a part of a forest farming system.

## Get Connected

If you want to learn more about getting started with agroforestry, contact:

### Savanna Institute

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### WI Land+Water

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### NRCS

Local Technical Service Provider  
www.nrcs.usda.gov/state-offices/wisconsin



### Silvopasture

Intentionally integrates trees into livestock pastures by adding trees to existing pastures or removing some from wooded areas. Trees provide shade for livestock and generate additional income through high-value crops like nuts, fruit, or timber.



### Alley Cropping

Cultivates crops between widely spaced rows of high-value trees or shrubs. This system diversifies farm income through timber, fruit, or nut harvests while reducing wind stress, stabilizing temperatures, and regenerating soil.



### Forest Farming

Grows high-value specialty crops like medicinal plants and mushrooms under a managed forest canopy. The forest may also produce high-value fruit, nuts, or timber products, creating multiple income streams.



### Windbreaks

Rows of trees and shrubs planted along field edges to prevent wind erosion and protect crops from wind damage. Though they remove land from commodity production, integrating tree and shrub crops can offset this loss by enhancing water availability and reducing dust and pesticide drift.



### Riparian Forest Buffer

Trees, shrubs, and other plants growing alongside streams, lakes, or wetlands. These buffers protect water bodies by slowing runoff, filtering nutrients, and stabilizing soil during heavy rains. Tree canopies keep water cool for fish, fallen branches provide habitat, and plantings can generate additional income while supporting birds and pollinators.



## REASONS TO CONSIDER AGROFORESTRY

### Diversify Income

Combine trees, crops, and livestock to spread risk and create multiple revenue streams.

### Build Long-Term Value

Earn sustained income from timber, fruit, nuts, or specialty crops while boosting land value for future generations.

### Protect Natural Resources

Improve soil, reduce erosion, protect water, and support pollinators and wildlife.

### Adapt to Climate Change

Store carbon, reduce greenhouse gases, shelter crops and livestock, and boost resilience to extreme weather.



### Additional Resources



**WI Land+Water**  
[wisconsinlandwater.org/agroforestry](http://wisconsinlandwater.org/agroforestry)



**Savanna Institute**  
[savannainstitute.org/adoption](http://savannainstitute.org/adoption)



**USDA Forest Service**  
[www.fs.usda.gov/nac](http://www.fs.usda.gov/nac)



**University of Missouri**  
[centerforagroforestry.org](http://centerforagroforestry.org)