



Credit: Red Fern Farm

What we do

The Mid-American Agroforestry Working Group (MAAWG) sponsors networking and educational activities to advance regional agroforestry interests. MAAWG partners share news of regional research, education and practice.

Learn more

More details are at www.midamericanagroforestry.net This website provides a portal to regional agroforestry news, information on upcoming meetings, resources, links to research, case studies, slide shows and more.

Follow [@agrof.maawg](https://twitter.com/agrof.maawg) on Twitter to get the latest agroforestry news, trends and events.

Contact us: maawg.agrof@gmail.com

Who we are



The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture was established by the 1987 Iowa Groundwater Protection Act to support the development of profitable farming systems that conserve natural resources. Learn more: www.leopold.iastate.edu



The USDA National Agroforestry Center (NAC) is a partnership of the U.S. Forest Service Office of Research and Development, state and private forestry and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. NAC accelerates the application of agroforestry through a national network of partners that conduct research, develop technologies and tools, coordinate demonstrations and training, and provide information to natural resource professionals. Learn more: <http://nac.unl.edu>

Other MAAWG partners:

- Agricultural Marketing Resource Center
- Center for Agroforestry, University of Missouri
- Center for Integrated Natural Resources & Agricultural Management, University of Minnesota
- Forest Agriculture Enterprises LLC, Wisconsin
- Green Lands, Blue Waters
- Red Fern Farm, Iowa
- Trees Forever
- University of Minnesota Extension
- USDA Agricultural Research Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Current MAAWG efforts are focused in Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota, Nebraska and Wisconsin. MAAWG welcomes involvement from new partners and states.



Credit: Forest Agriculture Enterprises

Mid-American Agroforestry Working Group (MAAWG)

A partnership to help advance the science, practice and adoption of agroforestry by natural resource professionals and landowners in the U.S. Midwest



Why agroforestry?

Agroforestry systems offer unique benefits to landowners and society. They can provide food and agricultural resilience in the face of the unprecedented challenges from increased energy costs, loss of biodiversity and climate instability. Challenges such as drought, excess rainfall, warming temperatures, higher atmospheric carbon dioxide levels, shifting seasons and related movement of disease and pests are already stressing our landscapes, farmers and communities.

Agroforestry provides multiple human and natural services, including:

- Producing food, fiber, energy
- Providing new enterprise options
- Reducing sediment and nutrient runoff
- Sequestering atmospheric carbon
- Improving soil
- Increasing biodiversity
- Enhancing habitat for native pollinators, beneficial insects, and fish and wildlife

Many are familiar with specific agroforestry practices, but the conscious, integrated application of these practices on working farms is still uncommon.



Credit: Lynn Betts, NRCS

Systems

The USDA defines agroforestry as the “intentional mixing of trees and shrubs into crop and animal production systems to create environmental, economic and social benefits.”

Agroforestry systems typically prioritize sustainability and strive to balance opportunities for income generation, public demand for forest-related products, and the improvement of forest and agroforest health and diversity. In these systems, knowledge, careful selection of species and good management of trees and crops are needed to optimize production and the positive effects within systems — and to minimize negative competitive effects.

Practices

Alley Cropping – growing hardwoods, orchard or nut crops alternatively with field crops

Forest Farming – managing crops such as ginseng, ferns, edible mushrooms or fruits under a forest canopy

Riparian Forest Buffers – establishing belts of trees and shrubs to enhance and protect aquatic and streamside resources

Silvopasture – combining management of livestock, forage and trees

Windbreaks – employing tree and shrubs to protect farm sites, residences or other infrastructure from wind and snow impacts

Special Applications – utilizing forest-related practices that focus on specific goals, including wildlife habitat enhancement and carbon storage

Products

Crops that agroforesters are growing and experimenting with for commercial production in this region include:

- **Nuts** – hybrid hazelnuts, hickory nuts, pecans, walnuts and chestnuts
- **Forest non-timber crops** – mushrooms, maple syrup, ginseng, floral greenery and herbs used in herbal and nutritional supplements
- **Fruits** – traditional and new varieties of elderberry, paw paw, persimmon, Asian pear, cherry, aronia berry and kiwi fruit

Many of these crops are of growing interest for markets that arise from new trends in nutrition, local foods and research findings on the health benefits of medicinal plants and plant-based diets.

Credit: Red Fern Farm



Training opportunities

MAAWG and its partners are providing Agroforestry Training Academy train-the-trainer workshops in 2013 and 2014 that are supported by North Central Regional Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE). MAAWG seeks workshop participants who can share what they learn with others in their area.

The 2013 event is August 5-9, at the University of Missouri. For more information, contact Mike Gold at GoldM@missouri.edu

The 2014 Academy will be hosted by the University of Minnesota. For more information, contact Diomy Zamora at zamor015@umn.edu

Thanks to a diverse group of professionals who are assisting with review and updates of an agroforestry manual for the Academy.