Aronia Berries

What is Agroforestry?

Agroforestry is the intentional integration of trees, shrubs and other perennials into crop and animal farming systems. It provides unique, nutritious foods without the heavy impacts of industrial agriculture. While agroforestry may appear to some as a new land management approach, many of these practices are indeed ancient and have been used for centuries by indigenous cultures around the globe, including those native to this area. These practices can be used on both large and small scales.

In the Northeast: Past meets Present

Forests were carefully tended by those indigenous to these Eastern Woodlands, cultivating their livelihoods on a highly-localized level. Re-integrating such practices could revitalize our relationship with land and each other by:

- Honoring each landscape for its uniqueness and adjusting our agroforestry & agricultural practices accordingly
- Harvesting and using the nuts, berries, fibers, fuel and shelter throughout the year
- Stewarding land for improved foraging, hunting & other sustenance, further improving ecosystem functioning on a large scale
- Using annual agriculture in partnership with various forest-based food systems
- Trading throughout the bioregion, contributing to local economies & increasing our resiliency

Benefits of Agroforestry

Carbon Sequestration

Agroforestry systems can capture and store significantly more carbon than other land-use systems, especially compared to typical agricultural practices using monocultures & regular soil tillage.

Not only is carbon stored in the woody mass of trees and shrubs, but because these lands are rarely tilled and mimic forested ecosystems, carbon is also captured in soils. This is amplified by integrating animals as a part of the carbon cycle.

Ecosystem Restoration

Healthy agroforestry systems are biodiverse and create space for pollinators, bird populations, other flora and fauna, and enhance wildlife corridors by by decreasing ecosystem fragmentation. They also clean the air, water, provide great shade, and limit urban heat island effects for neighborhoods while providing food or other amenities.

The soil is also intentionally kept covered which limits soil erosion, improves nutrient cycles and helps to filter & store water, creating foundational conditions for health ecology.

Resiliency

Diversity of crops helps to provide ecological and economic buffers when some plants have higher yields than others given the natural, cyclical– and possibly even unpredictable– growing conditions of each year, especially in the face of a changing climate.

This intentional diversity breathes life into our local economies & provides nutrient rich, resilient food sources, while supporting local farmers year-round.

Diversity of Place; Diversity of Taste!

Here are a few friends we'd like you to meet

Chestnut

Black Currant

Hazelnut

Black Walnut

Elderberry

Pawpaw

American Persimmon

Mushrooms

Chestnuts from Big River Chestnuts, Sunderland MA

Specialty Fruit & Nuts grown in Agroforestry Systems...

- Are great tasting & versatile
- Provide unique culinary experiences
- Add vibrant flavors to your dish
- Are highly nutritious & can help boost the immune system
- Are loaded with vitamins, minerals, proteins and healthy fats often missing from modern diets
- Taste like our very own bioregion!

Find out more on our website, including how to use them and where to find them

Good for Farmers, The Planet & You

Looking for more? Check out our online resources:

Contact Us

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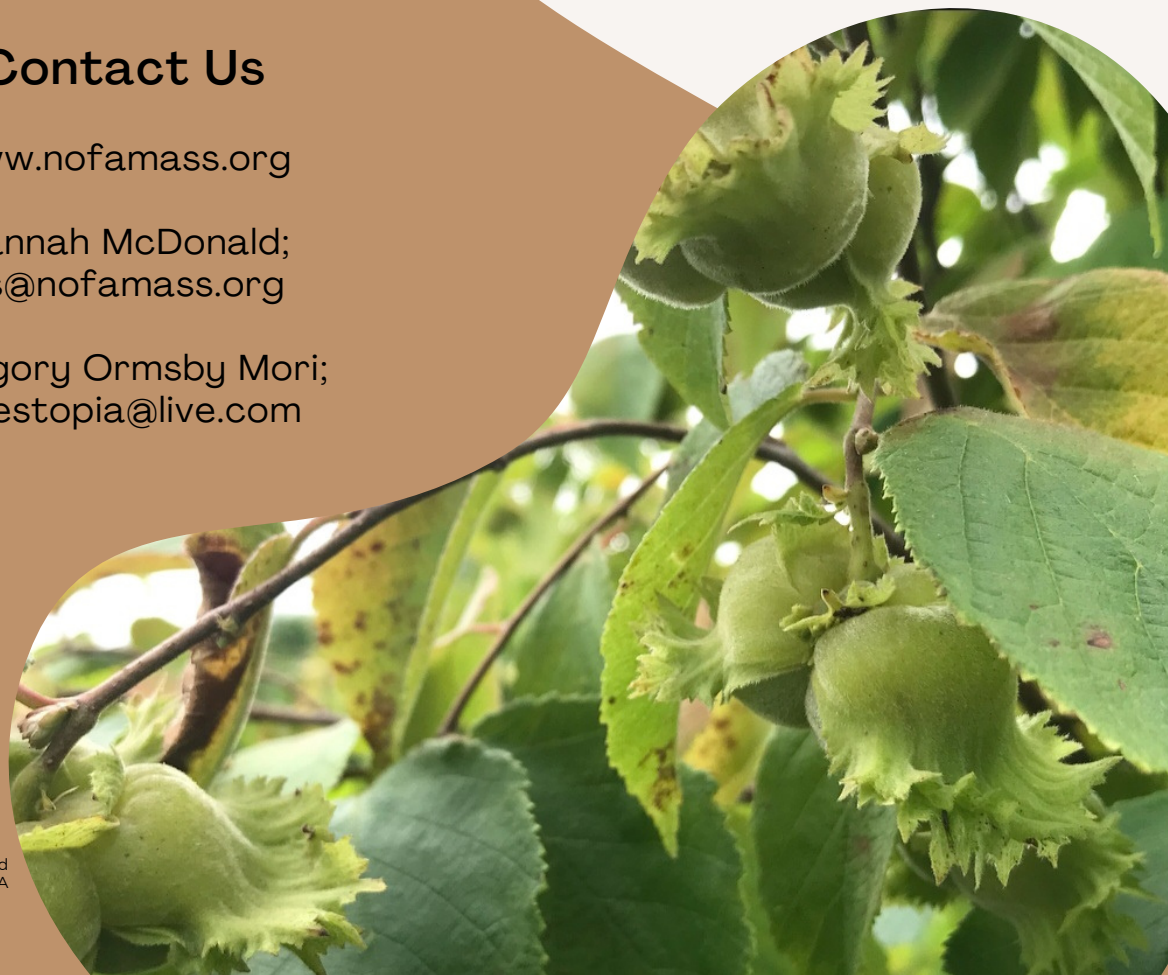
EXPANDING AGROFORESTRY IN MASSACHUSETTS

NOFA/Mass
Northeast Organic Farming Association
Massachusetts Chapter



Hazelnuts from Nutwood Farm, Cummington MA