



NOFA / Mass
Northeast Organic Farming Association
Massachusetts Chapter

EXPANDING AGROFORESTRY IN MASSACHUSETTS

Introduction & Integration Guide

Learn the tastes, nutrition, and other juicy info about these amazing perennial plants growing in agroforestry systems in the Northeast, including nuts, berries, tree fruits and other flavors that your farmers are working to grow

Agroforestry

Is the intentional integration of perennial plants (trees, shrubs, herbs, vines, mushrooms) into crop and animal farming systems. It provides us with 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 ancient and have been used for centuries by indigenous cultures around the globe, including those native to this area.

Find us at nofamass.org/agroforestry
or contact rfs@nofamass.org for more information

Chestnut

Chestnuts are a highly versatile and nutritious food loved all over the world. They are great roasted, used whole in stuffing and desserts, or dried and ground into flour for use in making pastries, pasta, desserts etc. They provide a great gluten-free alternative rich in vitamins (C, E, A, B complex) and minerals (copper, potassium etc.), and are high in fiber and polyphenols. Their low fat/high starch content is great for cooking and keeping you energized throughout the day!



Hazelnut

Hazelnuts are healthy and tasty. They can be shelled and eaten fresh, or used as an ingredient in confections, baked goods, etc. They can also be ground to flours and meal for baking, or of course, into Hazelnut nut spread. When pressed, their oil is yummy and great for cooking.

Nutritionally, they are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, Vitamin E, Thiamin Magnesium, Copper, Manganese, Vitamin B, Folate Phosphorus, Potassium, Zinc



Black Walnut

Different from the typical English walnut, these shelled Black Walnuts can be used as an ingredient in baked goods, ice cream and also eaten fresh. Immature nuts can be used to make a fermented liqueur. When pressed, they produce an excellent culinary oil that is "heart healthy" and rich in omega-3s. The shells can also be used as a bio-fuel or as an abrasive, both industrially and household (think kitchen scrubber!). If they are un-shelled, they provide a tasty animal fodder for pigs. The shells are also anti-fungal and an excellent natural dye. This tree is also an excellent timber species.



Hickory

A delicious, slightly sweet, fatty nut, Hickory is native to our area and have been used by local indigenous peoples for thousands of years. One of the most traditional recipes includes sweet Hickory nut milk, where the nuts are crushed and boiled into a sweet drinking liquid with some maple syrup. They can also be pressed into a culinary oil. For those with the patience to crack out the nutmeats, the tasty reward can be a great snack, or used in baking. A source of healthy fats, they're also rich in thiamine, manganese, copper, and magnesium.



Acorn

Acorns are not often thought of as a core staple for humans, but have served as such for thousands of years. Once the tannins, a group of bitter plant compounds, are leached out, Acorns become a delicious and nutritious food source, most commonly ground into flour. People also use them in drinks, desserts, pressed as an oil, as nut spreads, soups and even burger patties and pastas.

Acorns can also be used to make a fermented "nut cheese," the taste of which is nothing short of "divine." They are a great source of fiber, protein, healthy fats and a variety of antioxidants.



American Persimmon

Sweet, succulent with a hint of spice! The American Persimmon is another gem of a native fruit, though largely overlooked and underutilized. When eaten fresh, they're the tastiest when super ripe. They also perform great when dried, or pureed, and used in pastries, pies & bread or even brewed into wine or beer.

Leaves are rich in vitamin C, antioxidants, fiber, other vitamins and minerals, including Vitamin A for healthy vision.



Elderberry

A shrub that grows natively on the banks of streams and other ecosystem edges, Elderberry has received renewed interest and is becoming more commonly grown in the Northeast, given its well documented immune system boosting medicinal anti-viral properties. They are delicious when prepared as beverages, cordials and syrups, jams, gummies and candies, and can also be processed for supplements as well.



Pawpaw

An exciting fruit, Pawpaw has a native range just south of the Northeast, making it well suited for a changing climate. The largest fruit native to North America, it's typically sold as a fresh fruit in local markets because they don't ship well. They can be eaten fresh, or pulped and frozen for use in pastries, puddings, ice cream other food products, and has a delicious banana-mango custard flavor. Rich in vitamin C and other vitamins, & contains all of the amino acids.



Black Currant

You can find Black Currant used and sold as a fresh berry, though it is more commonly processed and used as ingredient for juices, syrups, cordials, candies, or pulp used in baked goods. When ripe, the berry turns sweet. It is noted to have positive impacts on the immune system, inflammation, eye health, and even digestive health and managing diabetes. It's packed with vitamin C- a quarter-cup has almost a full serving for the day.



Hardy Kiwi

You know kiwi? Well, this relative, also known as kiwi berries, is particularly cold hardy and able to thrive in the northeast. They're eaten fresh, or pulped and used as an ingredient in baked goods, beverages, and popsicles. Have enough sweetness in your life? They're also great in sauces, salads and as marinade for grilled meats. Their vines also make great material for weaving baskets.

Aronia

For the health conscious, Aronia berries are packed with vital nutrients and helpful antioxidants. These berries are tart, so they're often added to smoothies, jams, pies or muffins. They grow well in the Northeast, making a great opportunity to pack these plentiful, anti-inflammatory, heart healthy, immune boosting super berries into your diet. Depending on when they're harvested, they might even be sweet enough to eat. Ask your farmer!



Mulberry

Mulberries, whether black, white, or red, are delicious and fun to pick. Their leaves have been historically cultivated for silk worms and made into a powder which is added to sauces for flavor. Mulberries are often made into wine, fruit juice, tea, jam, molasses or canned, but can also be dried and eaten as a snack. They're particularly rich in vitamin C and Iron, and have other compounds that may help with blood pressure & heart disease.



Citations & Additional Links

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