



# What is AGROFORESTRY ?

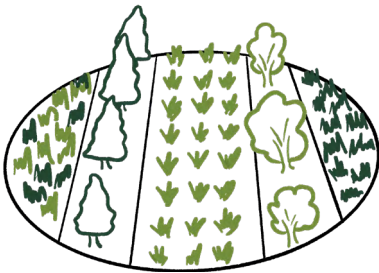
Agroforestry combines the cultivation of trees and shrubs with crops and/or livestock on the same land management unit. It aims to create more sustainable and productive land-use systems by integrating the benefits of forestry and agriculture.

There is a growing interest in agroforestry, partly because of its potential benefits for sustainable agriculture, biodiversity, and climate change mitigation. Agroforestry can also add to economic diversification by providing farmers with further income from timber or non-wood forest products such as fruits and nuts. Agroforestry often aligns with traditional farming practises, thus preserving cultural heritage.

There are also challenges related to agroforestry. Many farmers are not fully aware of its benefits or how to implement it. Also, establishing an agroforestry system can require significant initial investment and a shift in farming practices. In some countries, agricultural policies and regulations may not fully support or incentivise agroforestry.

While agroforestry is not yet as widespread in Europe as in some other regions, increased support from policy frameworks, research, and farmer education can help to expand its adoption and integration into European agricultural and forest landscapes.

## Agroforestry practises include:



### Alley cropping

Planting rows of trees or shrubs with wide spaces between them where crops are grown



### Silvopasture

Combining trees with forage and livestock production. Trees provide shade and shelter for animals and forage, while the animals help manage the undergrowth



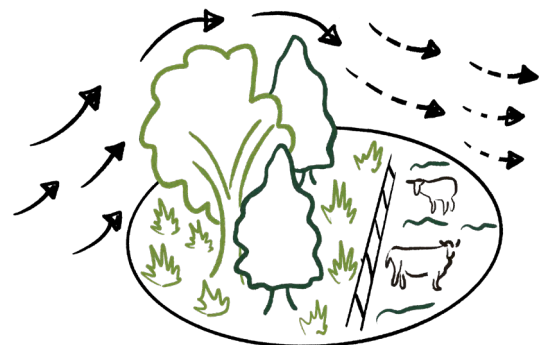
### Agro-silviculture

Integrating trees and crops, without livestock



### Forest farming

Cultivating high-value crops like mushrooms, fruits, or medicinal plants under the canopy of an existing forest



### Windbreaks or shelterbelts

Planting rows of trees or shrubs to protect crops and livestock from wind

## Further reading:

Nair et al. 2021. An Introduction to Agroforestry: Four Decades of Scientific Developments.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75358-0>



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