

Discover Newsletter for colleagues in Africa

Dear Friends and colleagues,

What is agroforestry?

Many of you have been growing your crops under trees, not knowing that you were practising agroforestry!

You are practising agroforestry when you have trees and shrubs in the same area as crops or animals.

Agroforestry provides benefits for the environment, your income and your well-being.



Agroforestry in Malibu, Uganda

An example of agroforestry from Malibu, near Kasese, in Uganda. Beans grow under the cover of *Prunus africana*, moringa, mango, avocado and lemon trees.



Robert Bwambale in Malibu, Uganda, writes, "What I see is that with agroforestry, the land never suffers heavy soil erosion like lands that have only one crop. Farmers enjoy working where agroforestry is practiced because they enjoy the shade of trees even though the sunshine is intense. This good land management is commonly practiced here in my communities of Malibu."



What are the benefits of agroforestry? Here are five reasons:

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| 1. | The produce from one plot of land is increased, with crops on the ground, e.g., vegetables and medicinal herbs, and produce from the trees, e.g., fruits, medicines, firewood and timber. |
| 2. | The soil is protected from erosion by the roots of the trees, particularly if the land is on a slope. |
| 3. | The soil fertility is enhanced from fallen leaves and from the roots of the trees, especially if the crops or trees are leguminous (nitrogen fixing). |
| 4. | Water is retained in the soil as rainfall is absorbed under the trees, especially if there is good ground cover. The shade of the trees prevents rapid evaporation. |
| 5. | The shade provides a better microclimate for many vegetables, especially during the dry season. |

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Which trees are best for agroforestry?

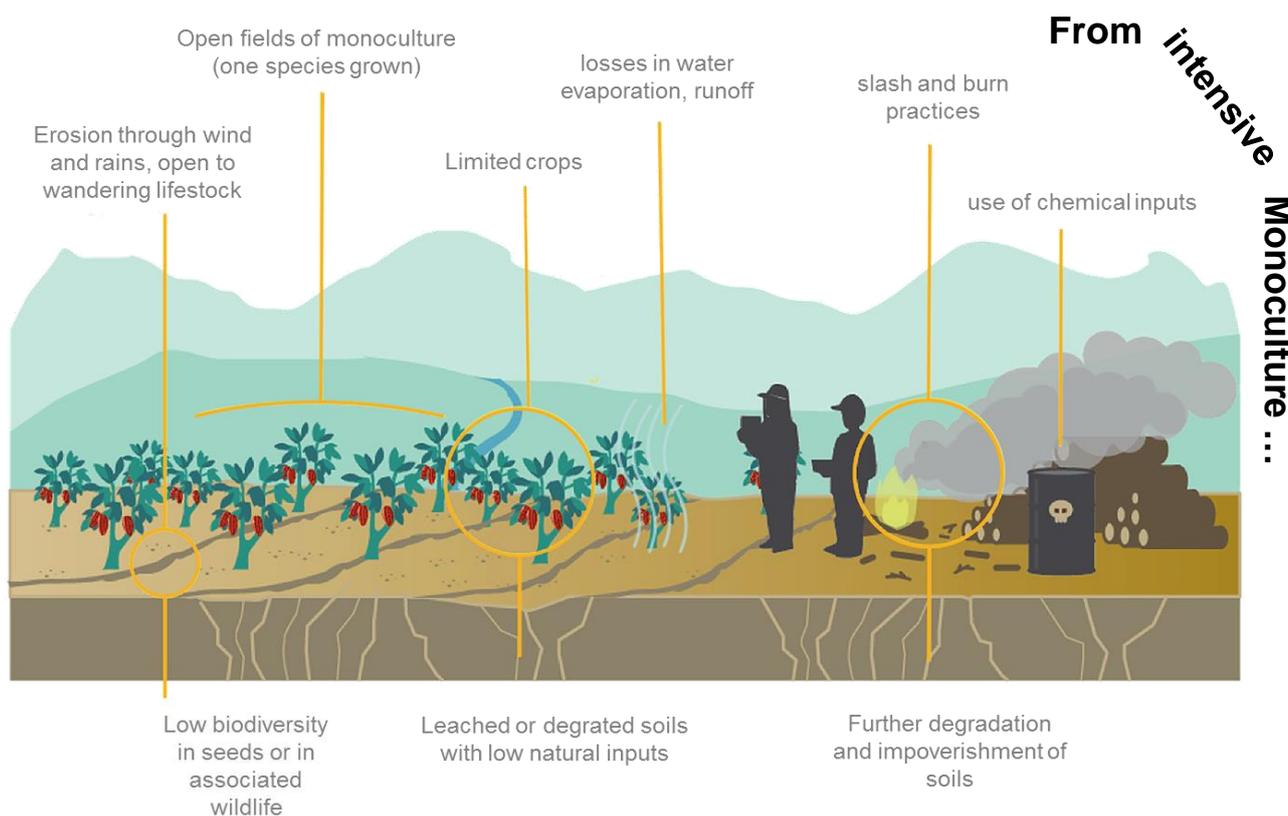
I would like to ask you to give me your opinion! Different trees have different benefits as stated above, e.g., to increase soil fertility, to provide shade, to provide fruit or nuts for nutrition or sale, or timber for building.

It is good to have a variety of species, and to make sure that some are native. The international "Plant for the Planet" organisation recommends that on plots of less than 1 hectare (2.5 acres) at least 3 different species should be planted, and on larger plots at least 5 different species. No species should represent more than 60%, and at least 30% should be indigenous.

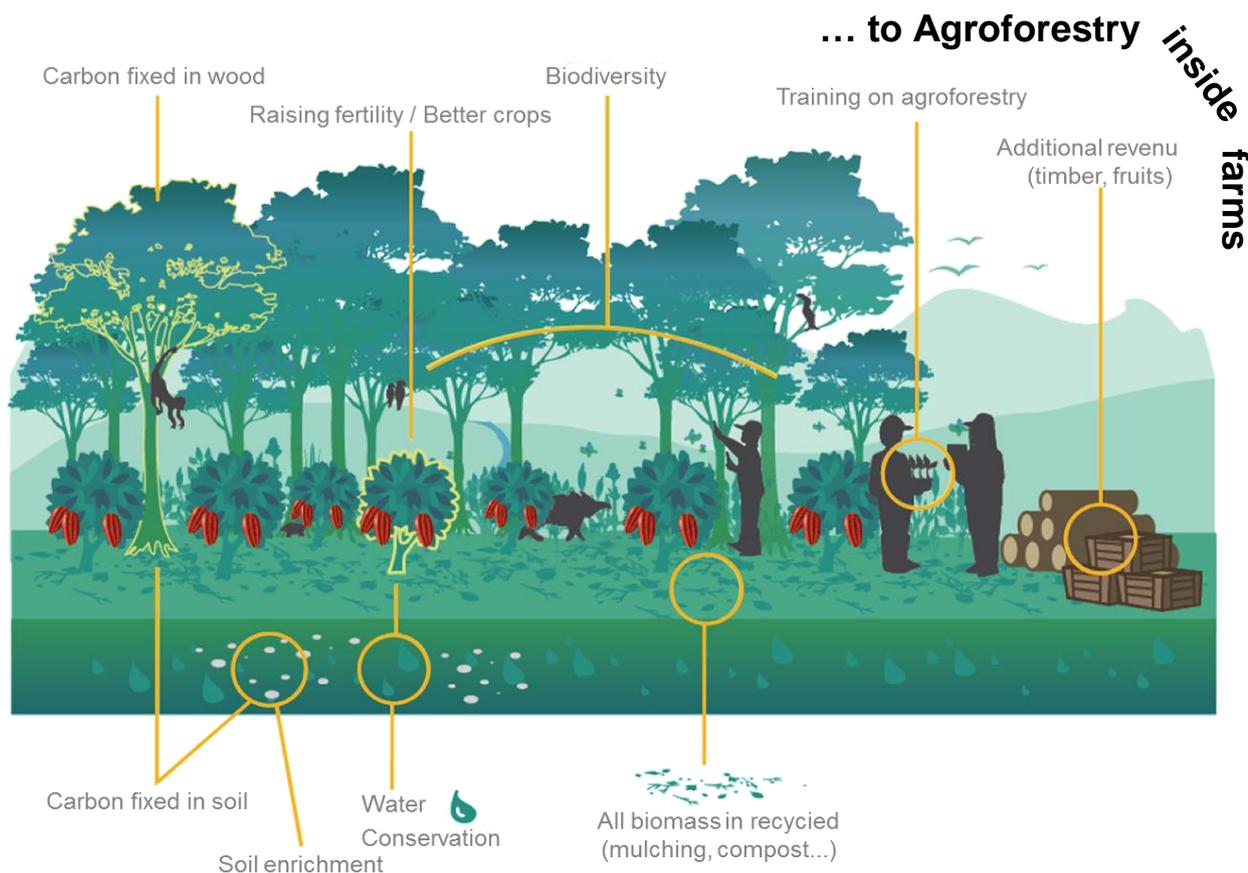
Please look carefully at the pictures below. These show the enormous benefits of trees and keeping the ground covered, ideally with cover crops.



Multiple Benefits from Agroforestry



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These pictures were taken from:

<https://www.purprojet.com/agroforestry-and-reforestation/>

This page includes more information about the multiple benefits of Agroforestry.

Please share your experience of agroforestry with me so that we learn from each other's experiences.

Keith Lindsey