



# Transition Farming & Biodiversity

*Agroforestry*



# Agroforestry

## Integrating Trees and Biomass Production into our Existing Farming

“Agroforestry is a collective name for land use practices where trees are combined with crops and/or animals on the same unit of land and where there are significant ecological or economic interactions between the tree and the agricultural components”.

— Lundgren and Raintree, 1982

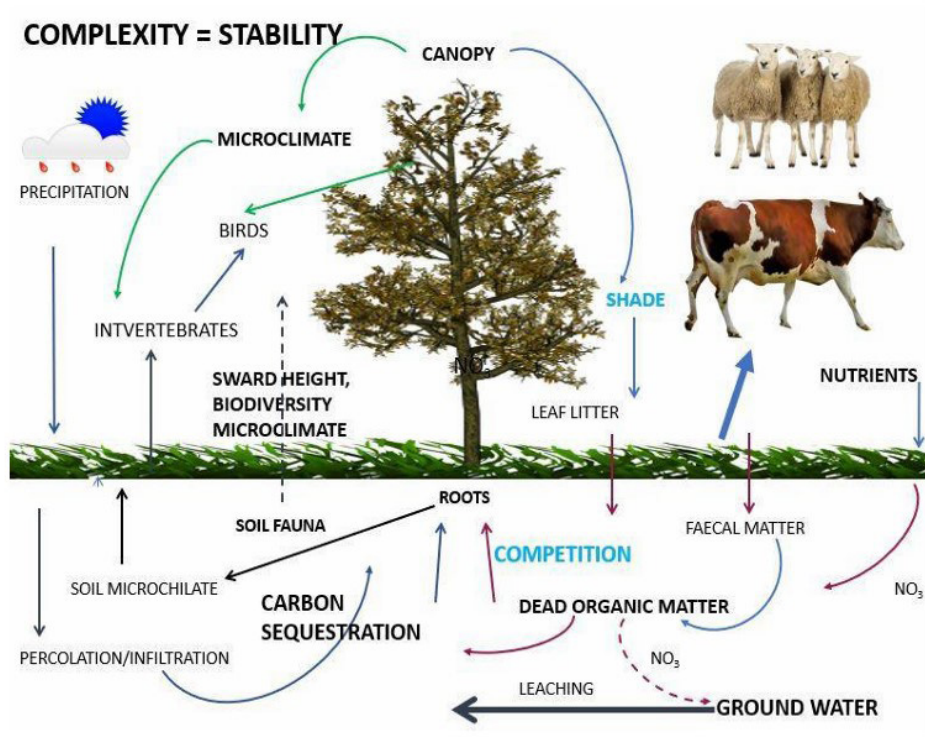
### Agroforestry in Ireland

Agroforestry is an ancient practice which is widely incorporated globally into land use systems. In Ireland, as the main land use is livestock grazing or tillage, silvopasture (where trees are grown in grazed or cut pasture in a regular or varied pattern) and silvoarable (where trees are grown in rows between an arable crop) systems are, respectively, the most widespread systems applicable.

The [Irish Agro Forestry](#) forum promotes the potential, and benefits of, agroforestry as a multifunctional land use option that integrates trees into agricultural and horticultural systems at a range of levels and spatial orientations, to sustainably produce nutritious, wholesome food and quality timber while delivering a wide range of ecosystem services



### Agroforestry Benefits, Interactions and Connections



## Silvopasture

Silvopasture is a form of agroforestry that combines grazing livestock with the farming of crops and trees where trees are grown in a grazed pasture in a regular or varied pattern. Sheep can be farmed alongside trees in a sustainable ecosystem in this way. Silvopasture extends the grazing season, allows higher grass utilisation, increases biodiversity, improves carbon sequestration, reduces water runoff, 'mines' phosphorus from a greater volume of soil.

Dr Lindsay Whistance's research shows that the presence of trees can benefit animals in multiple ways including temperature regulation, body maintenance and social behaviour.

### Group Activity:

#### Farm Trees and Forests; Potential for sustainability

Participants examined the benefits of rethinking the place of trees and hedgerows on our farms during this interactive, informative and innovative workshop with Jonathan Spazzi (Teagasc Forestry Development Officer).

Johnathan highlighted practical examples and models from around the world and advised on the most up to date schemes and supports for Agroforestry models.

### Group Activity:

#### 'Our Common Ground' Ireland's first Syntropic Agroforestry Conference

This took place in Kinsale Friary and [Kinsale College](#).

During this field trip to Kinsale, participants learned about

- Simple practices that can help to bring agroforestry to their gardens, farms and communities
- The application of regenerative forestry principles and practices to their own gardens, backyards, or community plots, no matter how big or small.
- The importance of soil health, which include flooding, drought, food security, health issues, planning a system, ground cover and maximisation of photosynthesis

*"It all starts and ends with the soil, healthy soils managed properly carry much more water and life and therefore sequester more carbon than is released." Paul Soden*

#### Speakers and themes at the conference included:

- **Paul Soden:** Keynote speaker: Syntropic agroforestry (Brazil / Ireland)
- **Thomas O'Connor:** Agroforestry Practitioner (Kerry), Farming for Nature 2019 award winner and a great fungi enthusiast.
- **Eugene Curran:** Forestry Inspector (Cork) (Department of Agriculture) – discussing grants available and current state of agroforestry in Ireland.
- **Alan Kingston:** Agroforestry Practitioner (Cork) discussing his Silvopasture and Silvoarable site in Skibbereen.
- **Donal Chambers:** Coordinator of the Sustainable Horticulture / Permaculture course, Kinsale College

### Resources:

- <https://www.irishagroforestry.ie/>
- <https://www.irishagroforestry.ie/conferenceproceedings>
- <https://www.teagasc.ie/rural-economy/rural-development/diversification/agroforestry/>
- <https://www.teagasc.ie/news--events/daily/forestry/forestmoochange-is-back-with-a-new-session.php>
- <https://kinsalecampus.ie/sustainable-horticulture-permaculture-5/>

