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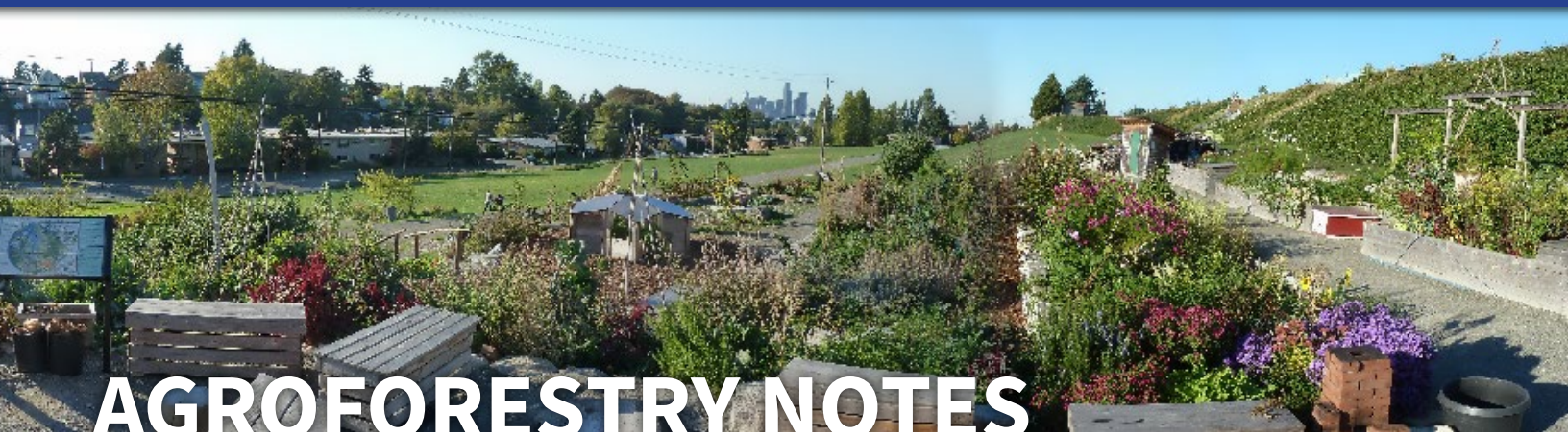

AGROFORESTRY NOTES

Urban and Community Food Forests and Forest Gardens

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Introduction

Forest gardens and food forests have been planted and stewarded by Indigenous peoples and other cultures around the world for thousands of years. These systems are rooted in traditional ecological knowledge, blending food production with long-term stewardship of the land. In recent decades, food forests have reemerged across the United States in innovative ways, often found in public parks, vacant lots, greenways, riparian buffers, along public forest edges, or combined with community gardens. Whether part of grassroots efforts or public and/or private partnerships, urban and community food forests are designed to maximize available resources and provide solutions to community needs. This Agroforestry Note focuses on public-facing urban and community food forests or edible forest gardens that integrate trees, shrubs, and perennial plants with community-driven design, creating spaces that can be both ecologically productive and socially engaging. Public-facing places include spaces that are on privately held property, such as the grounds of a nonprofit or religious institution, but are open to the public at specified times, or open to the community of volunteers, practitioners, or members associated with the private entity.

Citation

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Banner photo: Courtesy photo by Catherine Bukowski.

Definitions

In different contexts, people may use food forests, forest gardens, and other terms to reflect the different emphases, uses, or designs of these systems. Forest gardens and food forests fall under the U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service's Conservation Practice Standard 379: Forest Farming. This standard defines forest farming as "managing or establishing stands of trees or shrubs in coordination with the management and/or cultivation of understory plants or nontimber forest products" (USDA NRCS 2022). Although forest farming and forest gardening or food forestry are distinct practices, they share structural similarities which align under this standard. These practices all have multilayered plant arrangements that form a polyculture modeled on natural ecosystems. They also can produce a variety of edible or culinary, medicinal, decorative, or otherwise useful vegetation and products.

Forest farming involves managing existing forests to provide optimal shade levels and habitat that enhances the growth of desired understory woody and/or nonwoody crops for production (Feibel et al. 2024). Examples of crops that favor shaded forest conditions are mushrooms, ornamental ferns, ramps, ginseng, or medicinal herbs.

Forest gardening or food forestry blends agroforestry with gardening and landscaping to manage a spectrum of sunlight and shade levels to support high species richness. The design of these systems aims to replicate the structure, composition, and function of early-successional forest ecosystems where self-sustaining processes reduce the intensity of gardening maintenance over time in terms of fertilization and irrigation. Often, a common goal is to cultivate a variety of products throughout the year. Perennial crops (fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, perennial vegetables, herbs, tubers) are a key component of food forests (fig. 1). For example, apple trees, hazelnut bushes, blueberries, asparagus, oregano, strawberries, and rhubarb might all be grown together in a multilayered structure.

Figure 1—Food forests have multiple layers of vegetation and root systems including trees, shrubs, and understory plants or crops that are spaced according to their mature size while leaving access room for maintenance and harvesting. Illustration courtesy of Elizabeth Moore, Kindred Roots Design, LLC.

Sometimes there is tension in the terminology related to some food forest projects; while the terms "forest garden" and "food forest" emphasize the similarities to forest ecosystems, the core concept of designing productive, resilient landscapes can also be applied using prairie, savanna, or shrubland ecosystems as templates—especially in regions where these biomes are better suited to the local climate.

In "Farming the Woods" by Mudge and Gabriel (2014), the authors note that agroforestry and forest farming are defined in various ways by different sources, each contributing valuable perspectives to the conversation. The same holds true for the terms forest gardening and food forests. These terms are used in numerous design approaches and perspectives, including permaculture—a land management approach rooted in a set of agroecological design principles. While multiple terms may be used to describe food forests and forest gardens today, they all share design fundamentals including diversity, layered planting, system integration, and resiliency.

A further distinction of community-driven urban and community food forests is that they involve community members in the ideation, design, establishment, and/or ongoing management of these agroforestry systems. While their design is grounded in ecological principles, each food forest reflects the values, culture, and goals of the community or land steward, resulting in landscapes that reflect the people who tend them. Food forests that integrate community involvement can shape a sense of place, shared value, and identity tied to the care and co-creation of a forested space (Bukowski and Munsell 2018).

Challenges and Benefits

In various cultures, information about plant interactions, climate conditions, and best practices is transmitted across generations, forming systems that are uniquely tailored to local people and environments. In contrast, urban communities often include residents from different cultural backgrounds, some of whom may be unfamiliar with local ecosystems or native species. While this diversity can enrich food forest projects, it can also complicate implementation—especially when balancing ecological goals with unfamiliar foods, cultural preferences, or unfamiliar design approaches.

Other common challenges include navigating zoning laws, securing funding, ensuring long-term land access, and maintaining active community engagement. Ongoing leadership, knowledge transfer, and maintenance plans are essential for long-term sustainability but are often overlooked. Projects can also struggle if they rely too heavily on a small number of individuals or lack meaningful inclusion of community voices in decision making. Planning considerations are listed in the section below to help prevent these situations.

Despite these challenges, food forests can offer tremendous ecological and social value. They increase urban tree canopy, support biodiversity, manage stormwater, and contribute to climate-resilient food production. Food forests can be sources of knowledge exchange and learning. People working together in these spaces often experiment with new growing methods and share information including irrigation methods, local pest knowledge, or other considerations. What is learned on site can be taken to another garden to be replicated. Additionally, produce, seeds, and cultural values of plants or recipes can be shared between people as they engage with the food forest. Socially, food forests can encourage environmental stewardship, offer educational opportunities, and inspire community health, cohesion, and well-being. When developed with attention to community context, food forests can become more than just growing spaces—they can serve as platforms for healing, collaboration, and long-term resilience.

The Festival Beach Food Forest in Austin, TX is located on public park land and contains a variety of edible, medicinal, and ornamental plants including fig, pecan, corn, rosemary, and more. Courtesy photo by Katherine Favor.

Planning Considerations

Many interconnected elements contribute to the success of urban and community food forests. To address multiple elements, one useful approach to planning involves applying a systems thinking lens, which focuses on the dynamic relationships among different plants, site elements, and other biological, ecological, social, economic, and institutional components. Rather than focusing on isolated design elements, such as plant choice or layout, those involved in planning the site can take a holistic view, highlighting how all parts of a system are linked and influence one another over time. This allows for attention to both the visible features, such as people, infrastructure, and vegetation, as well as the less tangible but equally influential factors like policies, zoning codes, cultural perceptions, and governance structures. This approach can also help identify opportunities and challenges to address, such as the role of the food forest in the local food system or how the transportation system will affect visiting the site.

This perspective closely aligns with whole farm planning, which seeks to optimize multiple functions of a landscape by coordinating food production, conservation, education, and community engagement within one integrated framework. For those planning to incorporate a forest garden or food forest into a larger farming system, starting with whole farm planning can be a helpful approach. Additional resources are readily available on the Cooperative Extension program websites affiliated with many universities.

Integrating both physical and social elements in the food forest design can be supported by borrowing planning practices from a variety of professions and community services. For example, by combining landscape strategies drawn from agroforestry, public parks, and community gardens with

programming for education, leadership, and communication, the food forest can function as both a productive ecological/agricultural and social space. Activities such as workshops, guided tours, volunteer days, and leadership training programs can cultivate community connection, enhance knowledge sharing, and support long-term stewardship.

Given the complexity of these interrelated factors, a useful entry point may be defining the system's scope—identifying key functions, boundaries, intended outcomes, and stakeholders. This scoping process can inform practical decisions around timelines, team roles, and resource allocation, and can be continually reassessed considering available funding, labor, and tools. In this way, systems thinking enables a food forest to adapt and evolve in response to changing conditions while remaining rooted in shared community values and long-term sustainability.

Community Considerations

Taking community context into account at the start of a project can help with the long-term success of urban and community food forests. These projects often begin when an individual or small group seeks to address local issues such as food insecurity, lack of green space, or the need for a safe, shared gathering area. As the idea takes shape, early steps include identifying the intended beneficiaries, understanding the social and cultural context, and assessing whether a food forest is the best fit for the community's needs. If the public will be involved significantly in the food forest's management, the project should be developed with active and ongoing community input to encourage ownership and shared responsibility. This may include engaging a broad range of stakeholders, such as neighborhood residents, schools, religious groups, food banks, local nonprofits, and municipal partners.

Community-led projects have a better opportunity to flourish when many voices contribute to their development. To support participation, consider offering multiple ways for people to engage—surveys, feedback forms, or creative, nonverbal methods of gathering input from those unable to attend in-person events. Hosting meetings at accessible times and locations, offering translation or interpretation services, organizing family-friendly events, and providing materials in multiple languages can also reduce participation barriers.

As part of this, it is important to identify and remove barriers to participation. Sharing decision-making power, honoring different forms of knowledge, and designing for long-term participation can help ensure the food forest becomes a truly community-centered space. Establishing clear processes early on for how community members will interact with the space, make decisions, share responsibilities, and resolve conflicts can create a foundation for inclusive participation.

The Coastal Roots Farm food forest in Encinitas, CA is open to the public at certain times. They offer volunteer hours twice a week and host a variety of educational events and festivals throughout the year. Courtesy photo by Katherine Favor.

Team and Roles

Community food forests are often initiated and sustained by volunteers, with leadership frequently emerging organically from within the group. In many cases, people are learning as they go how to organize tasks and work together. Coordination and decision making may rely on a mix of informal leadership, collective governance, and partnerships with nonprofit organizations, local agencies, or funders. These entities may support planning, funding, or long-term management, but the extent of their decision-making power or influence on project direction and priorities can vary depending on the agreements established early in the process.

Creating strong social structures, such as inclusive leadership, working groups, teams, or rotating roles, and establishing clear communication supports shared accountability and helps navigate the complex process of planning and designing an urban or community food forest (for more information, see Chapter 12 of "The Community Food Forest Handbook"). Creating teams can also clarify expectations, prevent volunteer burnout, and ensure that the physical, ecological, and social components of the food forest are all addressed equitably. Organizers may use various decision models ranging from hierarchical to consensus based, depending on the group's preferences. Whatever the model, open communication and clear team roles and responsibilities can help maintain momentum by distributing work tasks, keeping volunteers engaged and feeling valued, and supporting a sense of belonging and collaboration. Table 1 offers descriptions for potential teams, roles, and responsibilities.

Table 1—Team suggestions with key roles and responsibilities

CATEGORY	ROLES	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	Project lead, partnerships liaison, administrative support, decision facilitator, report writer	Team coordination, decision making, internal communication systems, stakeholder engagement, documentation, conflict resolution, planning and timeline management
ECOLOGICAL DESIGN	Agroforestry specialists, permaculture designers, ecologists, horticulturalists, botanists, stormwater engineers, landscape architects, arborists	Site assessment and mapping, site design, plant lists, ecological planning, care and maintenance recommendations
COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION	Community organizers, volunteer coordinators, event planners, educators, accessibility advisor, social media influencer	Volunteer engagement and training, public events planning and hosting, inclusive outreach, education programs, multilingual communications, school partnerships, guest speaker coordination, skills workshops
LOGISTICS AND OPERATIONS	Site manager, maintenance team, tool and equipment organizer, contracts and procurement specialist, operations manager	Site preparation, materials procurement, infrastructure maintenance, task scheduling, ongoing site management
LEGAL MATTERS	Legal advisors, government liaison, permit manager	Compliance with zoning and regulations, legal agreements, permitting and approvals, liability measures, insurance coverage, water rights

CATEGORY	ROLES	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
FINANCE AND FUNDRAISING	Grant writer, budget manager, fundraising coordinator	Budgeting, funding proposals, financial tracking, donor relations, sustainability planning
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	Ecological monitors, impact evaluators, citizen science coordinators	Plant and soil health tracking, pest and disease monitoring, social and ecological impact assessment

Even with the most thoughtful and intentional preparation to spread the responsibility, the initial enthusiasm of volunteers and leaders can wane. In community-managed projects, one way to transfer knowledge and ensure continuity from the beginning is to document processes, decisions, and lessons learned. This can help future leaders to better sustain the project over time. By encouraging a system where leadership and tasks are shared, community food forests are more resilient and adaptive to changes in participation and external circumstances.

Financial Considerations

Urban and community food forests are often supported by some combination of grants, donations, and volunteers. Regardless of which type of financial resource is used to manage the project, it is important to review the project feasibility within budget constraints. Plan for potential financial hurdles by considering challenges that may arise and the cost of their potential solutions. Here are some tips for financial planning:

- Create a detailed budget that covers all aspects of the project, including the initial setup, program or event costs, maintenance needs for the first few years, and how needs will change once the site is better established.
- Plan for financial sustainability by identifying and securing diversified funding sources such as grants, donations, partnerships, sponsorships, fundraising campaigns, and volunteer contributions. Donations may also come in the form of seeds, plant material, or equipment.
- Explore revenue-generating activities (e.g., offering tours for a donation, planting one area to sell produce from while keeping other areas for free harvesting, or hosting paid events like harvest dinners, holding workshops that require a ticket to attend).

Legal Considerations

Consider addressing legal matters early to avoid project delays and protect the project team from liability. It might be beneficial to elect one or two representatives from the food forest leadership group as liaison for legal issues or seek pro bono assistance from an expert. Some initial legal considerations could include:

- Clarify land ownership and obtain legal agreements and permissions from stakeholders.
- Document all agreements and permissions for future reference.
- Address liability and consider insurance coverage for volunteers, visitors, and organizers.
- Ensure legal access to water sources in compliance with local water rights and regulations.
- Follow food safety regulations if harvesting produce for consumption or distribution and post health and safety signs as needed.
- Ensure built structures (e.g., pathways, seating areas) comply with safety codes and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards.

Design Considerations

Site Selection

Site selection is an important first step in developing a food forest or forest garden project because a difficult site can cause more work and problems to overcome for project success. The organizers may already have a property or area of land in mind for transformation. Table 2 outlines factors to consider when searching for a property if a piece of land has not been chosen. Collecting this information will also be beneficial during design and planning stages.

If the search for property takes a while, this time can be used to engage community members to build support and enthusiasm for the project. Ideas include holding informational meetings and workshops on topics such as how community members can contribute and participate; defining community values; or brainstorming what plant species are of interest.

Table 2—Site assessment and design development considerations

CRITERIA	CONSIDERATIONS DURING SITE ASSESSMENT	CONSIDERATIONS FOR DESIGN DEVELOPMENT
Size and shape	Assess space available for structures, pathways, and plant layers.	Allocate space for mature plant growth, infrastructure, and access for harvesting and maintenance.
Topography	Evaluate slope, aspect, and drainage patterns. Identify steep inclines that pose safety risks to users.	Use topography to guide drainage and sun access. Place infrastructure to block wind, create microclimates, or add seating.
Microclimates	Observe temperature, wind, water, and sun exposure patterns across the site.	Design to enhance microclimates for temperature moderation and increased plant diversity.
Water availability, rights, usage	Confirm legal access to clean, reliable water and identify any drought restrictions.	Incorporate rainwater harvesting and efficient irrigation systems (e.g., drip, soaker hoses) to conserve water.
Soil quality	Test soil for drainage, pH, contamination, and nutrient levels.	Use soil improvement techniques like mulching, composting, decompaction, raised beds, or berms to improve soil structure and fertility to support plant establishment.

CRITERIA	CONSIDERATIONS DURING SITE ASSESSMENT	CONSIDERATIONS FOR DESIGN DEVELOPMENT
Site history	Research previous property uses to identify contamination risks and historical or cultural significance.	Plan for soil remediation and/or cultural integration. Consider social or cultural history and how to align the design with the desired community narrative.
Existing vegetation	Identify existing vegetation for preservation or removal. Remove invasive species and assess the ability to use edge spaces for plants that need increased sunlight and airflow.	Layer vegetation to optimize space, increase biodiversity, and build resilience. Include seasonal variation for year-round interest. Design plant communities to support growth, health, and pest resistance. Stagger planting to extend harvests and use resources efficiently.
Fauna	Identify beneficial wildlife to protect. Evaluate potential pest impacts on the project's success.	Include habitat features (e.g., birdhouses, bat boxes, insect hotels) to support biodiversity. Use fencing or barriers for larger animal control.
Legal and zoning considerations	Review zoning laws, permitted uses, and any land restrictions or protected areas on the property.	Secure permits, easements, and agreements. Monitor expiration dates and construction deadlines. Research regulations on acceptable aesthetics and safety requirements.
Access	Assess accessibility via private and public transportation. Identify entry and exit points and delivery routes for maintenance. The surrounding environment, such as nearby businesses, parks, schools, and neighborhood groups, may influence when and how the site is used and by whom.	Design ADA-compliant paths and entries for safe and inclusive access. Use lighting and signage to enhance safety and comfort for all users. Identify invisible barriers, such as perceptions of safety or a sense of belonging to ensure that all community members feel welcome and confident in accessing the food forest. Consider signage in multiple languages most commonly used in the community; include clear, explanatory graphics.
Infrastructure	Inventory existing roads, buildings, fences, and utilities that could be reused, modified, or may restrict use.	Use seating and gathering area designs that encourage community interaction and enjoyment. Consider storage structures that can have multiple uses, such as side walls that show a site map or harvesting guidelines and roofs can be part of a rainwater harvesting system.
Environmental impact	Assess how the food forest will impact or be impacted by the local ecosystem and explore design elements to mitigate potential negative effects.	Use native plants to support local wildlife, pollinators, and beneficial insects. Include permeable surfaces for pathways or gathering spaces to support on-site rainwater infiltration and reduce stormwater runoff. Avoid nonnative plants that have aggressive growth and may become invasive, are susceptible to disease, or attract damaging insects.

Site Design

The site design process expands on ideas developed during the initiation and site selection phase, while continuing to foster community support and involvement. Once the property location is confirmed, organizers can conduct a detailed site assessment that builds on earlier observations made during property selection. Table 2 also suggests key elements to include in this assessment and design phase. When possible, observe wind, water, and light conditions across seasons to help place the right plants in the right locations.

Information gathered during community brainstorming sessions can serve as the foundation for early design ideas—such as zones of use, pathway flow, infrastructure placement, and species selection. Designing a food forest is an iterative process that often begins with creating rough sketches, sharing with the community, gathering feedback, refining the concept, and repeating until a final design is reached that reflects community goals and site conditions. This collaborative process is sometimes referred to as holding design charettes.

When planning the layout of plant communities, start with the tallest layer, typically fruit or nut trees. Once tree spacing is determined, place shrubs or berry bushes at the edge of the expected mature canopies. After placing these structural layers of the canopy and subcanopy, other woody and herbaceous perennial plants can be interspersed in the understory based on the amount of shade or light they can tolerate over time as the canopy fills in. Typically, a few of the same species are grouped together for ease of identification, maintenance, and harvesting. Low-growing, ground cover species can be planted throughout the site to suppress weeds, retain moisture, and reduce erosion. Native options like sedges are especially useful to help outcompete undesirable species in areas that will experience foot traffic or transition to shade over time.

Perennials typically take longer than annual plants (around 3–5 years) and significant amounts of time and labor to fully establish and for ecological processes to develop in a newly planted system. Regular maintenance might include activities such as mulching, weeding, pruning, watering, and removing or replacing dead or diseased plants. Consider planting annual crops to fill open gaps in the early years of growth to maximize the production of the site and to reduce spaces that undesirable species might fill. This phased approach also allows the site to remain visually engaging while the long-term structure evolves. As the canopy trees and larger bush species mature and light availability changes, expect the composition of understory species and necessary maintenance practices to shift.

In a public-facing food forest planted in a traffic circle in Tucson, AZ, stormwater enters the planting through curb cuts, irrigating native edible and medicinal plants like nopal, mesquite, willow, desert hackberry, palo verde, and sage. Courtesy photo by Katherine Favor.

Management

Food forests can benefit from adaptive management, a process that involves continuous observation and adjustment based on what is or is not working well. This means regularly assessing the food forest to make necessary changes over time. For instance, even with careful planning based on site conditions, some plants may thrive while others may struggle and need to be replaced. By observing which plant communities perform well, underperforming plants can be replaced with more successful species. Food forests may also affect the surrounding environment if left unchecked. Monitoring interactions between the food forest and the local ecosystem helps to avoid issues such as a species becoming invasive or a plant disease outbreak.

In addition to ecological monitoring, the social aspects of the food forest may need tending and adaptive management as well. Some volunteer groups will thrive and engage deeply, while others will find the project does not suit them. As the volunteer base shifts with new recruits, it is a good idea to check in often with volunteers to assess and understand their experience. Organizers may also consider having a way to collect feedback from community members to ensure that the space and community events feel safe, inclusive, and accessible.

Some management activities, such as collecting and storing seeds from thriving plants, have both social and ecological benefits. The seeds become a source of new, locally adapted plants to fill gaps where other plants did not survive. The seeds can also be distributed to volunteers as a thank you and encourage home gardening. Seeds from volunteers' plants can then be shared with more community members, promoting food growth and successful gardening with locally adapted seeds while building a network of gardeners and saving community members money on seed buying.

Maintenance

Regular monitoring and maintenance activities are essential for the health of a food forest; the work is not complete after establishment. Examples of monitoring tasks include checking plants for signs of disease, pests, or nutrient deficiencies; conducting soil tests to monitor pH and overall soil quality; and ensuring irrigation systems are functioning properly. Implementing integrated pest management (IPM) strategies can help control pests while protecting beneficial organisms. Involving community members in routine pest and disease monitoring not only improves efficiency but also provides valuable hands-on education. Some key maintenance tasks involve pruning at appropriate times to encourage healthy growth; regular weeding to reduce competition; applying mulch to retain soil moisture; and using compost to enrich the soil.

As the food forest matures, some of the species planted initially will die or lose productivity as shade levels increase and site conditions change. To manage competition for light, trees and shrubs may be pruned to maintain light levels. Another option is to plant successional species that can grow in the new conditions. For example, strawberry plants might function as a ground cover around a young fruit tree during the initial years of establishment, but as the canopy grows and creates a larger circle of shade underneath, the strawberries will lose productivity and die out. Replacing them with a shade tolerant groundcover, such as a sedge or perennial flowering species, will ensure productivity in the space while simultaneously reducing weeding. Tracking plant species and ecosystem interactions over time supports the long-term goals of the food forest as the system matures and changes.

Remember, even if the diversity of understory food producing plants decreases, the overall fruit production of the site may stay the same or increase as the quantity of fruit increases as trees and bushes mature. Noting these changes during maintenance will help with adaptive management of the site and notifying members of what is available for harvest.

Agriculture Park in Columbia, MO is a food forest open to the public year round that contains more than 40 fruit and nut trees including apple, cherry, peach, apricot, pear, mulberry, Asian pear, and pecan. The food forest also contains understory shrubs, brambles, and herbs. Forest Service photo by Katherine Favor.

Concerns

Sustainability and Longevity

Often, the goal of an urban or community food forest is to persist and be maintained as long as possible, but some projects do come to an end due to a change in land ownership, a lack of volunteers, funding issues, or other reasons. If this happens, communicate openly with the community and stakeholders about the decision to close the food forest. With input from the community, consider creating a respectful and inclusive closure process that honors the impact of the project and, as possible, allows for final harvests. Depending on the situation, holding a community gathering or ceremony to commemorate and acknowledge the efforts of volunteers and supporters may be appropriate.

If the food forest can be left in place, evaluate its condition and make sure any hazardous conditions are fixed before abandoning it. If it needs to be removed, consider transplanting or giving away plants to community members and recycling or donating infrastructure materials. Document the closure process, including reasons for closure, actions taken, lessons learned, and community feedback. Storing records of financial transactions, donations, or associated grants is essential in case these records are needed again.

Conclusion

Food forests and forest gardens offer numerous social and ecological benefits to urban and community spaces. Their planning and upkeep strengthen social bonds and promote community engagement in numerous ways. Public-facing, community-led projects can empower communities to manage resources, learn about local governance, and take part in group organization, management, and volunteer opportunities. By taking action to shape where they live, residents have a hand in creating accessible and productive green spaces that reflect their interests and cultures. These spaces can

improve public health by introducing fresh produce and promoting nutritious diets while supporting mental well-being through relaxation and recreation. Food forests may also serve as living classrooms, teaching ecological principles and sustainable gardening practices to community members of various ages. Ecologically, food forests boost biodiversity, improve soil health, manage stormwater, reduce urban heat islands through increased canopy coverage, and provide habitat for wildlife. Additionally, food forests can offer locally acclimated seed sources that could be used to enhance home gardening success. Through these combined social and ecological benefits, food forests and forest gardens serve as transformative spaces that sustainably enhance local food production and empower communities to thrive.

Governments and local authorities are increasingly recognizing the benefits of urban agroforestry, including food forests and forest gardens, and are developing supportive policies and initiatives. This includes zoning changes, grants, and incentives to encourage the establishment of community gardens and food forests. Overall, urban and community food forests represent a whole systems approach to urban sustainability, integrating ecological and social benefits. With continued support from policymakers, communities, and innovators, food forests will likely play a significant role in shaping resilient, healthy, and equitable cities of the future.

Additional Information

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