



Developing a self-sustaining agroforestry family farm

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How to develop a self-sustaining agroforestry family farm in an area that has been partially abandoned for decades, partly under arable farming? What are the main guiding principles? Farmers living in Zsörk (Hungary) took into account the microclimatic conditions of the area when designing and establishing the farm. Adapted to local conditions, they have established wood pastures, grazed fruit groves and forest gardens.

They have preserved the natural habitats of the undisturbed areas and the old trees of local varieties of wild fruits (pear, apple, plum, walnut). The cultivation of wild fruits and wild herbs typical of the area is one of the most important parts of development.

They formed patches of homegardens or forest gardens by clearing the shrubbed, forested orchards and planting locally bred trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants, and established wood pastures and fruit groves by planting wooded islands on abandoned arable lands and meadows.

The diversity of the farm and the inclusion of naturally occurring vegetation make the system more resilient and long-term productive.

The main plants are pear, apple, plum, walnut, rosehip, hawthorn, grape, mushroom (grown on logs in forest patches), wild salad plants, spice and herbs. Grazing also requires the use of domestic breeds.

In this way, you can create a self-sustaining system that works like a natural ecosystem while producing healthy, chemical-free, high-quality and well-sold food.



Figure 1. Aerial photo of Zsörk (above). Farmers have preserved the natural habitats of the undisturbed areas and the old trees of local varieties of wild fruits (below). Photo: Csíkvári J.

Andrea Vityi

University of Sopron, Co-operational Research Centre Nonprofit Ltd, Hungary

Judit Csíkvári

Farmer, Zsörk