



Decision making tools to help farmers select species appropriate for agroforestry systems

www.eurafagroforestry.eu/afinet/

The most suitable species for establishing a new agroforestry system will depend on the specific site conditions and the priorities of the farmer/landowner.

Trees are a long term crop and it is worth spending some time carefully considering the options available and the objectives of the planting (e.g. for a tree crop, for timber, livestock welfare) at the design phase.

Along with visiting agroforestry sites and speaking to agroforestry practitioners there are several tools and databases available to help with species selection. Useful resources include:

- The Plants for the Future Useful Temperate Plants Database contains information on the edible, medicinal and many other uses of several thousand plants that can be grown in temperate regions. It is a working database, new records are entered and older records updated on a regular basis. The database currently lists 8283 species. There is also a Tropical Species database with 11,027 species.

- The Woodland grazing toolbox designed for woodland owners and farmers seeking to use livestock to manage their woodland to achieve biodiversity and/or cultural heritage objectives contains a guide to developing a Woodland Grazing Plan including selecting suitable species.

- The Agroforestry Research Trust has a useful guide to selecting suitable timber tree species for agroforestry systems and guidance around species suitable for forest gardens

- Cornell University in the USA and Citree in Germany have both produced woody plants databases with decision support tools to enable the user to match plants to desirable traits and sites characteristics.

References:

The Plants for the Future Useful Temperate Plants Database (<http://temperate.theferns.info/>)

The Woodland grazing toolbox (<https://forestry.gov.scot/woodland-grazing-toolbox>)

The Agroforestry Research Trust (www.agroforestry.co.uk/about-agroforestry/timber-tree-species/)

Cornell University woody plant database (<http://woodyplants.cals.cornell.edu/home>)

Citree woody species for urban spaces database (<https://citree.de/?language=en>)

Sally Westaway

Jo Smith

Organic Research Centre, UK