Appendix Section 3: Grasses and Forages for Agroforestry

In this chapter:

- Identifying the Proper Grasses and Forages for Agroforestry
- Design and Management



Shade Trials: Learning about the shade tolerance of plant species is important to the Center for Agroforestry. Here mulches and forage crops are tested to identify their potential for planting under trees.

Agroforestry combines trees, shrubs, forages, grasses, livestock and crops in innovative, flexible combinations tailored to the landowner's needs. Through their integration with farm practices, production and conservation benefits can occur simultaneously. However, because the same resources are often used by all the plants in a given area, competition can pose some challenges to productivity.

What Makes a Forage/Grass Appropriate?

The answer will likely vary according to each landowner's specific interest and goals. That said, many trees and shrubs can be planted in configurations or densities that will also enhance the production of select forages and/or

grasses. In fact, the University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry has researched and identified many cool season grasses and legumes that produce better or the same under 50% shade as compared to full sun.

The following pages may be used as a general reference and guide for the selection of an appropriate forage/grass for your agroforestry practice.

As a component of a farm system, the properly designed and implemented agroforestry practice will help:

- Increase crop production
- Diversify products and farm income
- Improve soil quality and reduce erosion
- Improve water quality and reduce damage due to flooding
- Enhance wildlife habitat and improve biodiversity
- Reduce pest management inputs.

Design and Management

Planting design and management of an agroforestry practice depends on existing site conditions and the goals of the landowner. (You may also refer to the section on each specific practice for more information on design considerations) Many forages/grasses will do quite well under partially shaded conditions. The following table outlines some of the forages/grasses that the University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry has identified for use in partially shaded environments, and what can be expected from their productivity in shaded environments. In all cases, consider the products you wish to produce, any conservation or wildlife benefits desired, on-farm equipment and the needs of companion crops when planning the planting design.

When you decide on the appropriate forage/grass for your agroforestry practice, you should then seek out specific information on how to manage or establish that specific forage/grass species. Some considerations that will have a significant influence on the success of the forage/grass of choice include:

- Soil pH
- Time of seeding
- The use of companion or nurse crops
- Seeding method (broadcast vs. drilling)
- The use of herbicides to control undesirable/competing species
- Seeding rates
- The need for Inoculation
- Seed bed preparation
- Soil fertility

Each of the above mentioned establishment and management considerations can have a significant impact on both growth and productivity of a forage/grass stand. For more on establishing forages and seeding of a variety of forages common to Missouri, please reference:

Forage and Grass Recommendations for Agroforestry

Following is a table of forage and grass species suitable for agroforestry practices in Missouri. Included in the table are recommendations on practice applicability, potential uses and general site recommendations. Forages and grasses are listed in alphabetical order by common name. Consult with your regional agronomy specialist, or check with your University Extension personnel, to identify specifics on the appropriateness of a forage or grass to your region.

The following list is not exhaustive, but rather a starting point. All species listed may not be suited to all sites or regions within the State.

Identifying the proper forages and grasses

When selecting a forage/grass species, consider compatibility with the site. The selected species should be capable of providing the products and services desired by the landowner. Depending on the agroforestry practice selected, other forage/grass considerations may include:

- Level of shade tolerance
- Season of production (example, warm vs. cool season grasses)
- Productivity capacity for a given site. For example: is it drought-tolerant, or capable of growing on a wet site that is known to flood periodically?
- Compatibility with end use (example: is the forage for livestock, or is the grass intended for erosion control and other conservation needs?)
- What species already exist on the site and can a natural forage/grass stand be enhanced?

Common Grass and	Legume Forages for A	s for Agroforest	groforestry Practices in Missouri		
Common Name Scientific Name	Agroforestry Application	Valued for	Growth Characteristics	Site Requirements	NOTES:
Alfalfa Medicago satiro	Alley cropping Silvopasture	• Hay	Perennial Cool-season Legume Persists 5-8 years Flood into lerent	Best on well drained soils Does best in full sun Soil pH above 6.0	Excellent hay High maintenance Low to moderate - tree competition
Alsike clover Triolium öybridum	Alley cropping Silvopssture Riparian buffer	Erosian control	Perennial Cool-season Legume	Low, wet areas on a variety of soil types Higher tolerance to soil acidity than Alfaffa	Sometimes utilized for forage and hay production in mixtures with red clover and grasses
Annual les pedeza Komweroe is sóporaces or strata	Alley crapping Sinopasture	• Wildlife benefits	Annual Wern-season Legume Tolerates lower pH than other legumes Tolerates high temperature	Productive on shallow, infertile soils soils	Allow to resced in late summer Best used in pastures and most effective when grown in grass sod
Annual ryegrass Jollyn mulfforum	Silvopasture	• Forage	Armual Cod-spason	Best under high ferfilly	- Winter Annual
Bermudagrass Cynorian dactyran	Alley crapping Silvopsature	Erosian control	Perennial Werm-season Mot shade tolerant	Prefers deep, sandy loam or medium textured solis Will grow on poorer solis with management.	Grazing betrant May writer till perfoularly in Northern Missouri
Big bluestern Andrapogon gwardt	Alley cropping Silvopasture Riparian buffer	Wild life benefits Evesion control Hay	Perennial Warm-szeson Not shade tolerant	Prefers deep, well-drained soils soils soils	If burned, care must be taken to protect trees Native
Birdstoot trefoil Lates porntulation	Alley cropping Silvopashue Riparian buffer	Erceian control	Perennial Cool-season Legume	Tolerates poorly-drained, droughtly, infertile and acidic soils better than Alfalfa.	Albwisand to returally reseed every 2-3 years
Buffalograss Buchbe dachreites	Silvopasture	Erosian control	Perennial Warm-season Drought resistant Sod forming	Avoid sandy soils	• Withstands heavy grazing

Common Name Scientific Name	Agraforestry Application	Valued for	Growth Characteristics	Site Requirements	NOTES:
Canada wildrye Elymus canadansis	Shopesture Riparlan buffer	Width benefits Eroson partrol	Perennial Coolecason	+ Groves in wet shaded areas	- Native
Caucasian bluestem Andropogoo caucasia	Alley cropping Shropasture Riparian buffer	Eros on paritirol	Warm-season Not shade talerant Long active growth period	• Needs good distrage	Grazing tolerant Don't need to burn
Creeping red fescue Festives rubra	Shopasture Riparian Buffer	Erosion particol	Perennial Cookseason	Grows best in well drained, infertile and droughty soils.	Stade to terant Leually used for furf
Crownwelch Coroxilla vente	Alley anopping Ripartan buffer	Ettes on particol	Deep taproori Spreeds vegetatively Legume	Best adapted to we Lorained, fertile soils with pH 6.0 or greater	Does not to lerate grazing
Eastern gamagrass Tripsecam sactytoldes	Alley gropping Shopesture Riperlan buffer	Width benefits Ension control Hay	Warm-season Warm-season Slow to establish Tolentes femporary flooding Stiff upright stems Forms large dumps or mounds Not tolerant of shade	Deep soils in low areas	Excelent forage Native
Hop clover Tribotum agranum	- Shopesture		Annual Coblession Legume	 Tolerates poorly-drained, droughty and infertile soils 	Libed mainly in Southern Missouri
Illinois bundiaflower Desmarktus Woderaks	Aley dopping Shopesture	- Widhe benefits	Warm-eeason Legume	Grows well on clay or finestone soils	Sometimes used in mix with warm-season grasses Mative
Indiangrass Sorginashum ovlets	Alley acopting Shopesture Riparian buffer	Wildhe benefits Erosion control	Wermhall Werm-season Not stack to learnt grows 4-6 feet tall 2-3 years to establish	Deep, moist soils	Mative If burned care must be taken to protect trees

Common Name Scientific Name	Agroforestry Application	Valued for	Growth Characteristics	She Requirements	NOTES:
Kentucky bluegrass Poe pratensis	Shopusture Riparian buffer	Erosion control Whed suppression	• Perennial • Capl-season	Grows on a variety of soil types	. Usually used in mixes for grazing
Little bluestem Schizachynum scopanum	Alley cropping Shropasture Riparian buffer	Wildlife benefits Ension control	Perennial Warm-season	Droughly sites Grows on a variety of soil types	Mits with warm-season grasses Native
Orchardgrass Dactylis glomerata	Alley cropping Shropasture Riparian buffer	Erasian control Hay	Perennial Cabl-sason Shade tolerant Short fixed Mat tolerant of overuse Bundh grazs	Talerates moderately poor drained soils, yet is intolerant to flooding	Mixes well with legumes [affafa, ladino dover) Motures yearly Moderate - thee competition Disease problems under some conditions
Red clover Tribolum pratense	Alley cropping Shropsitus Riparian buffer	Erosion control Hay	Perennial Cool-seleson Short fixed Leguma Easy to establish	Prefers fertile, well-crained medum to heavy textured soils.	Best in grass/legume mixture Common in pastures Can crowd out grass in seeding year if planted too thick
Redtop Agrostis grigantise	Alley cropping Shropasture Riparian buffer	Erosion control Cover crop in orchards	- Perennial - Cod-season - Long-lived - Sod-forming	Will grow at lower pH and in wether solls Adapted to a wide range of soil conditions	Moderate - competition with trees Use smooth bromegrass, redtop, alsike clover and ladino clover in filter strips
Reed canarygrass Phalans annohracea	Alley cropping Sivopasture Riparian buffer	Erosion control Hay	Perennial Cool-season Grows up to 6 feet tall and dense Tolerant of wet and drought. Mat forming - dense Hand to establish	Grows well in wetor dry soil Wet areas	Recommend low alkaloid variety Too compatitive with trees Invasive in wet areas

Common Name Scientific Name	Agroforestry Application	Valued for	Growth Characteristics	Site Requirements	NOTES:
Sidecats grama Bourdous ourfipenduis	Skopastire Ricaran buffer	Wild fe benefits Erosion control	Perennial Warm-season	Droughtly sites Grows on a wide variety of well-drained soils:	Mix with other native warms season grasses Native
Smooth bromegrass Bromus viernis	Aley cropping Shopestue Ricerian buffer	Erosion control Hay	Perennial Cool-season Sod former with good lettity Winter handy	Best growth on deep, fertile sols	Weeds or companion crops may retand establishment from spring sowing
Sorghum- surbangrass Sarghum hybrids	Aley aropaing Shopesture	• Hay	Annual Warm-season	Requires high fertility and moisture	Tall growing, competitive
Sudangiass Sorphum bicolor	Aley cropping Shopasture	• Hay	Armal Warm-season	Requires high ferbility and moisture	Tell growing, competitive
Sweetclover Mediates sp.	Aley cropping Shopasture	• Seil Improvement	Armal Biennial Legume Drought blerant Winter handy Deep bapood:	Not to learnt of acid soils	Improperly cured hay can contain the palson Discumantal
Switchgrass Pancum regalum	Alley oropping Shopestue Ricarian buffer	Widfle benefits Ension control Hay	Perennial Warm-season Long lived Grows 4-8 feet tail Flood and her biolde to learnt Good deep roof filtering Slow to establish (2-3 years)	Performs well in wet areas Vill grow where meny grasses will not Prefers lettle, well-drained sites	Plant thick to avoid weed competition If burned care must be taken to protect trees Native
Tall fescue Festion arunditacen	Alley orapping Skropasture Ribarian buffer	Eroston comits Hay Seed	Perennial Cool-season Drought tolerant Handy	Tolerates mamy soil conditions	May be too competitive with brees Endoptyte free/friendly endoptyte varieties recommended Grazing to lessent Good fall pesture

Common Name Scientific Name	Agroforestry Application	Valued for	Growth Characteristics	Site Requirements	NOTES:
Timothy Phleum prantense	Alley cropping Shopesture Riparian buffer	Erosion control Hay	Personnial Cool-season Winter hardy Short lived Bunch grass	Prefers well-drained, moist so is Not to lerent of droughty sites	Intolerant of overgrazing Use in a mixture with other cool season grasses and lagumes Low- competition with tree
Virginia wildrya Elymas wighteus	Riparian Buffer Stvopssture	Widile benefits Ension control	Cool season Perennial Slow to get started	Grows in moist sandy soils Profers medium techned soils	Should be used in conjunction with other grassess
Western wheat grass Pasooprum smiths	Shapasture Riparian buffer	Widile benefits Erosion control	Perennial Cool-sesson	Grows well on low, heavy soils	+ Produces an open but uniform sod
White/Ladino clover Trifolum repens	Sikapasture Riparian buffer	Widthe benefits Ension control	Perennial Cool-season Legume Not drought to brant	Does best in wet soils and seasons Performs poorly on shallow, droughty soils	Use in combination with grasses
GENERAL NOTE:	• "Viam season grasses ma	d paou Aeur sasseu	rescribed fire for management which	y need prescribed fire for management which may not be compatible with agroforestry	estry

Additional Resources

Online:

- For a number of publications on specific forages and grasses, visit: http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/crops/#Forages
- Plant Resource Guide: Materials and Management http://www.centerforagroforestry.org/ pubs/training/appendix6.pdf
- Establishing Forages http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/crops/g04650.htm
- Seeding Rates, Dates and Depths for Common Missouri Forages http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/crops/g04652.htm
- USDA NRCS Plant Database http://www.plants.usda.gov/
- University of Connecticut Plant Database of Trees, Shrubs and Vines http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/a/a.html
- Grow Native http://www.grownative.org/
- Native Plant Information http://www.grownative.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=plants.main
- Silvics of North American Trees http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/silvics_manual/table_of_contents.htm
- MDC Private Lands Division http://www.mdc.mo.gov/landown
- Missouri Flora Database http://www.missouriplants.com/
- Arkansas Home and Garden Plant Database http://www.arhomeandgarden.org/planto-ftheweek/archivesa_d.htm
- Grasses of Iowa http://www.eeob.iastate.edu/research/iowagrasses/speciescn-nat.html
- Kansas Wildflowers and Grasses http://www.lib.ksu.edu/wildflower/
- USDA Forest Service Plant Database http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/
- The Right Tree Handbook Minnesota Power http://www.mnpower.com/treebook/

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