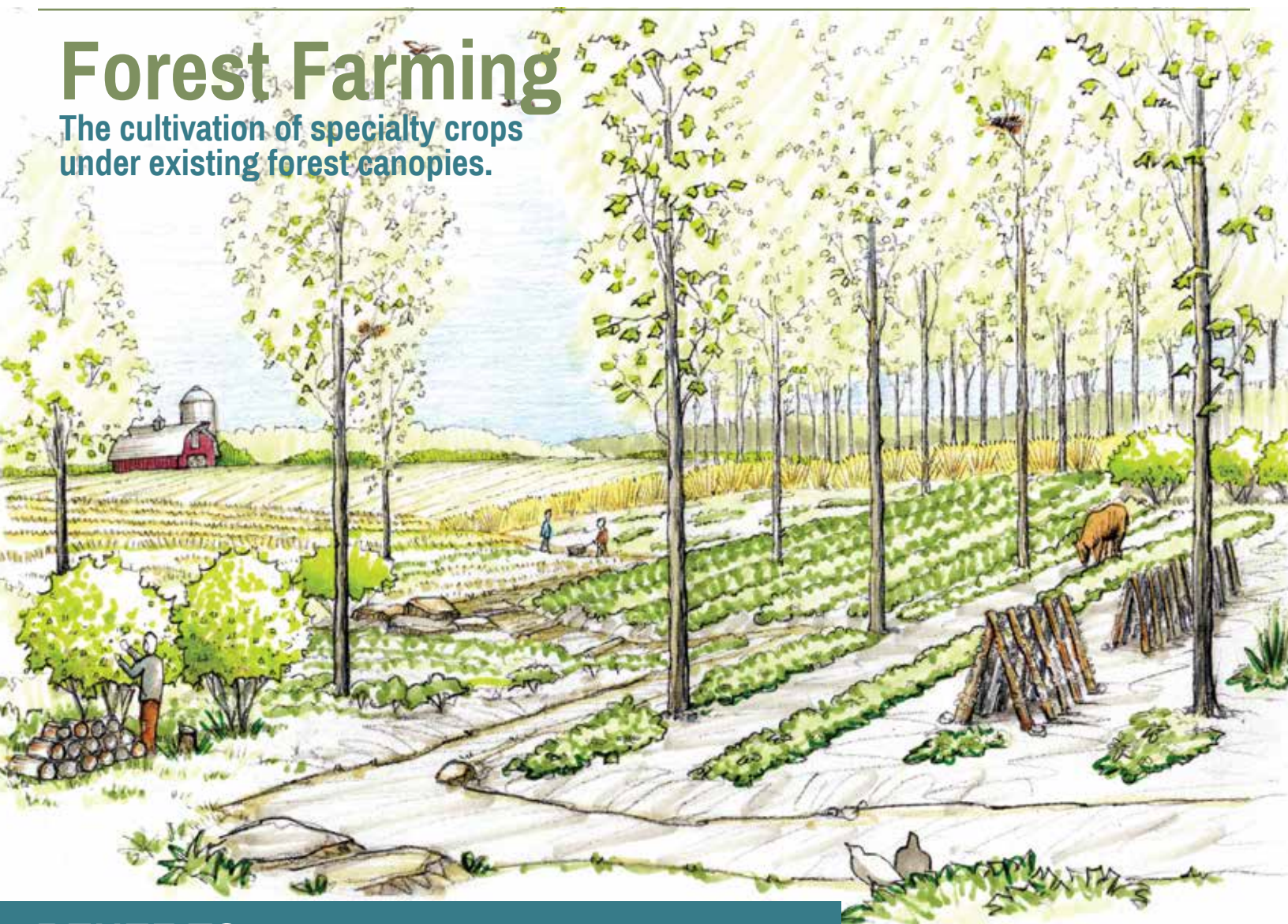


Forest Farming

The cultivation of specialty crops under existing forest canopies.



BENEFITS

Economic

INCREASED INCOME GENERATION:

Farming in the woods can be done without major disturbance and provide additional income in forests typically just managed for timber.

FLEXIBILITY IN MANAGEMENT:

Intensive to minimal, depending on the product and desired market.

COMPLEMENTS EXISTING

PRODUCTION SYSTEMS: Uses resources that would otherwise be underutilized.

Ecological

LOW IMPACT: Does not interfere significantly with the ecosystem services forests already provide.

INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT:

Management of forest understory for production can displace invasive species that often otherwise occupy this area.

CHALLENGES

LONG-TERM CROPS ARE AT RISK OF:

Disease outbreaks and pests.

Soil fertility loss.

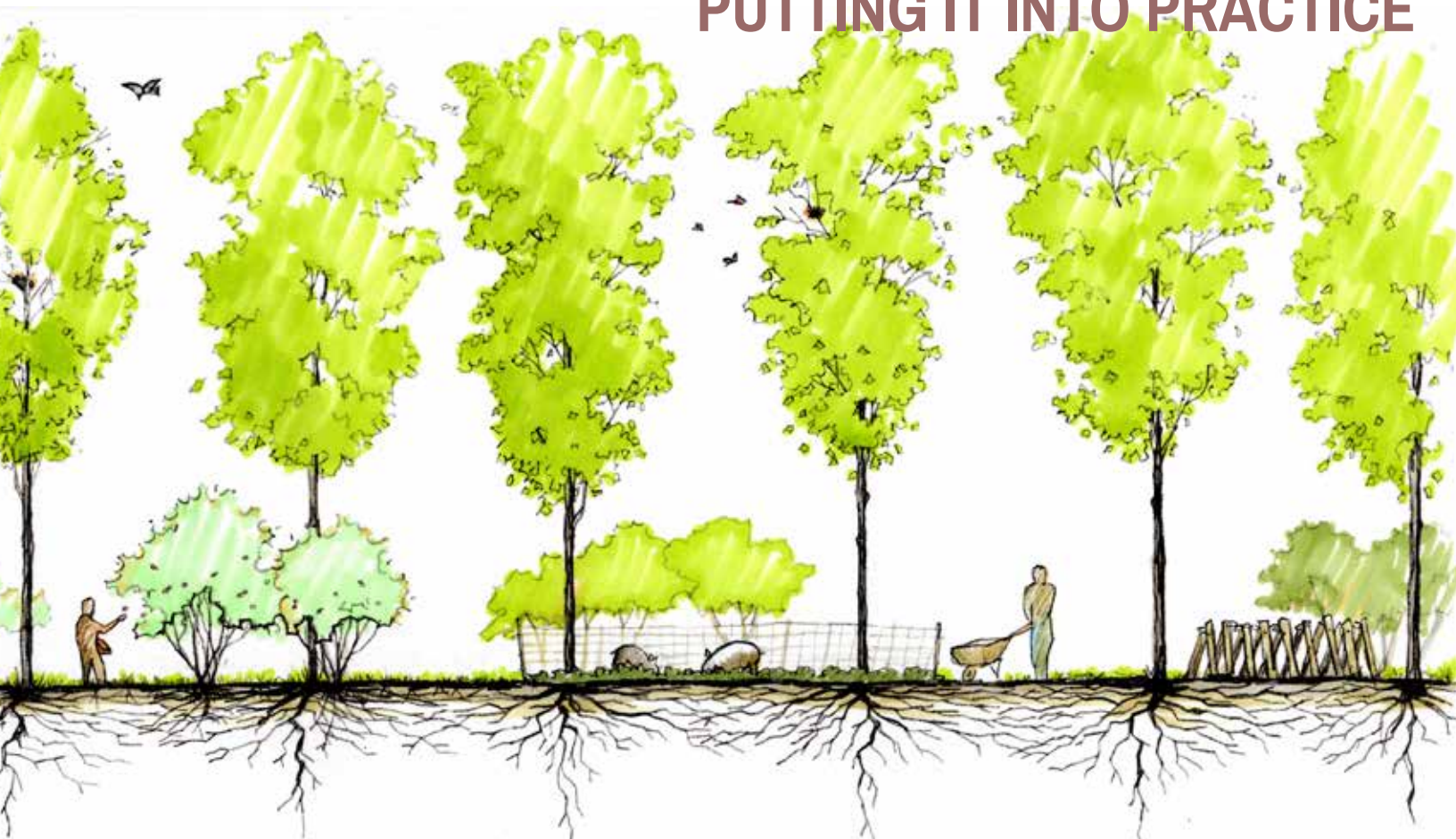
Crop loss due to poaching or weather.

Shortage of processing facilities.

MARKET ESTABLISHMENT is a time intensive and long-term process.

DETAILED RECORD-KEEPING AND MARKET RESEARCH is required for selected products.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE



Frequently Asked Questions

SITE SELECTION AND PREPARATION?

Consider slope and aspect, tree cover, soil quality, and understory vegetation when selecting forest farming site and preparing it for a particular crop.

FUNDING AND PLANNING ASSISTANCE?

Connect with the local conservation district and extension offices to learn about federal and state cost-share programs such as EQIP, CRP, and CSP. These offices can also provide connections with regional consultants and technical service providers.

WHAT CROPS TO GROW?

A variety of non-timber forest products can be cultivated in the understory of the forest.

CULINARY: mushrooms (shitake, matsuki, oyster), ramps, gooseberry, currant

ORNAMENTAL: club fern, spanish moss, shade-tolerant cut flowers and stems

MEDICINAL: ginseng, goldenseal, elderberry

FINDING MARKETS?

Markets for non-timber forest products include direct to consumer, restaurants, to wholesale depending on the product.

Determine and familiarize yourself with selected markets before selecting and planting product to determine appropriate planting rate.

The Savanna Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization working to catalyze the development of and adoption of resilient, scalable agroforestry in the Midwest US. We work in collaboration with farmers and scientists to develop perennial food and fodder crops within multifunctional systems grounded in ecology and inspired by the savanna biome. The Savanna Institute strategically enacts this mission via research, education, and outreach.



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