



# Agroforestry Crops for the Northeast

Regenerative Design Group

January 2020



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**Agroforestry** is a land management strategy that integrates trees and shrubs with annual and perennial crops and/or pasture land. Agroforestry systems contribute to farm resiliency by diversifying a farm’s ecology, market opportunities, and income streams.

**High Potential** crops are reliable growers *and* have established or emerging markets for fresh and value-added products. **Moderate Potential** crops are more variable in cultivation and market reliability, but show good promise.

## High-Potential Crops

Crop	Commercial Viability	Market Price	Years to Yield	Value-Added Products
<b>American Persimmon</b> ( <i>Diospyros virginiana</i> )	Ongoing efforts to commercialize. Pulp is probably the most commercially viable product after value-added items.	\$2-\$3/lb retail	Seedlings: 4-9 years; grafted trees: 3-4 years	Preserves, cider, vinegar, dried (hoshigaki)
<b>Aronia</b> ( <i>Aronia melanocarpa</i> )	Popular “superfood” in Europe. Suitable for juice, jam, or other value-added products.	\$21/lb fresh frozen; \$12/32 oz juice; \$13/lb powder	2-3 years, with maximum starting at 5 years	Preserves, juice, cider, vinegar
<b>Chestnut, Chinese/Hybrid</b> ( <i>C. mollissima/C. x</i> )	Demand generally exceeds supply; strong opportunity for growing regional markets.	\$2-7/lb wholesale	4-6 to bear; 10 for heavy yields.	Flour, baked goods, spreads, specialty holiday
<b>Cider Apples + Pears</b> ( <i>Malus var./Pyrus var.</i> )	Hard cider industry continually growing. Fruit can be sold to cidemakers whole or as juice.	\$12-\$18/bushel wholesale	Depends on rootstock + varieties; 2-7 years	Juice, cider, vinegar, wine
<b>Elderberry</b> ( <i>S. nigra, S. americana</i> )	Value-added markets, particularly in the health industry. Wholesale growers should arrange for market contract prior to production.	Berries, w/ stems: \$0.50/lb; w/out stems: \$3-\$5/lb; PYO: \$1.25/lb; \$11/lb to dietary supplement manufacturers	3-4 years from cuttings, 2-3 from potted stock	Preserves, juice, cider, wine, vinegar, tonic, syrup
<b>Currant/Gooseberry</b> ( <i>Ribes var.</i> )	Minor crops in U.S., but market is growing. Fresh sales and value-added products.	\$4-\$8/lb retail	2-3 to bear; full production at 4 years	Preserves, juice, cider, vinegar
<b>Hardy Kiwi</b> ( <i>Actinidia arguta</i> )	Market for NZ kiwi; potential for growing regional markets of <i>A. arguta</i> . Some challenges due to perception as invasive.	N/A; NH study found market-goers willing to pay around \$4/6 oz (\$10.66/lb)	Can set fruit as early as Year 3; 6-7 years for appreciable harvests	Cider, vinegar, wine, preserves
<b>Hazelnut hybrids</b> ( <i>Corylus avellana x am</i> )	Established domestic + int. markets; demand exceeds supply. Profitable crop.	Wholesale: \$2.50-\$3.50/lb Retail: \$6/lb in-shell; \$14/lb shelled	4-5 to bear; 6-7 for heavy yields.	Flour, oil, spreads
<b>Pawpaw</b> ( <i>Asimina triloba</i> )	Market research, public + private breeding programs expanding. Markets for pulp are critical for success.	\$3-\$5/lb retail	Seedlings: 5-8 years, Grafted: 3-4 years or less	Preserves, cider, vinegar, pulp
<b>Schisandra berry</b> ( <i>Schisandra chinensis</i> )	Imported from China, used in health tonics. Niche market potential with herb wholesalers/herbalists/restaurants/value added products.	\$44-52/lb for China-grown, dried, OG berries	3-4 years	Juice, cider, vinegar, syrup, extract, tonic



## Moderate Potential Crops

Crop	Overview	Site Requirements	Market Price	Commercial Potential
<b>Beach plum</b> ( <i>Prunus maritima</i> )	Wild to sandy coastal regions; commercial cultivation similar to other plum. Demand exceeds supply, due in part to dwindling natural stands.	Well drained, moderate fertility. Full-sun.	\$4-\$6/pint fresh	Niche crop for local markets, value added, + nursery stock.
<b>Black locust</b> ( <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> )	Easy to grow, numerous benefits: N-fixing, nutritious leaves for ruminants, source of food for bees, wood has high BTU + is rot resistant.	Tolerant of wide range of soils + conditions; will form groves if not managed.	\$1 – \$3 per linear foot for whole posts; \$1.50 – \$3.50/board foot for milled lumber	Lumber, post, + fire wood; part of a larger diversified operation.
<b>Black walnut</b> ( <i>Juglans nigra</i> )	Allelopathic. Supplemental watering or irrigation may be necessary during establishment, especially dry years, as walnuts do not do well in drought conditions.	Deep, well-drained soil with medium to good fertility + soil pH of around 6.5. Full sun.	\$10 - \$14 per 100 pounds hulled (wholesale)	Nut crop + lumber; part of a larger diversified operation; nuts more popular in midwest.
<b>Goji berry</b> ( <i>Lycium barbarum</i> )	Relatively disease/pest-free. Fresh goji not available in U.S.; berries are viewed as a potential niche crop. Variable in growth requirements, habit, yields, + quality.	Well-drained sand, loam, and clay soils with moderate fertility. Full sun.	\$14/lb for dried berries (retail)	No proven regional markets for fresh berries; niche crop - part of a larger diversified operation.
<b>Heartnut, Buartnut</b> ( <i>J. ailantifolia, J. xbixbyi</i> )	Heartnut's hardiness zone is 6-7, while Buartnut can be grown in regions as cold as zone 4. Potential for contributing to regional sources of walnut, which is widely known and consumed.	Fertile, well-drained, moist sand + clay loam. Full sun.	\$15/lb for organic walnuts (retail)	Niche crop - part of a larger diversified operation.
<b>Juneberry, Serviceberry</b> ( <i>Amelanchier spp</i> )	Challenges with planting material, consumer acceptance, pests/disease pressure and crop reliability. A number of varieties have been developed in Canada but regional reliability needs to be tested.	Adaptable. Likes well-drained soils with a pH between 5.5-7.5. Full sun to part shade.	\$6/pint PYO	Potential markets for fresh and value-added. Virtually no commercial cultivation in the Northeast.
<b>Korean nut pine</b> ( <i>Pinus koraiensis</i> )	Similar to white pine. Flourishes in a semi-shaded area, benefits from mycorrhizal fungi. 10-20 years to produce nuts.	Well-drained, sandy, acidic. Shade is essential during first 2 years.	\$18/lb. (retail)	Niche crop for cones + nuts; part of a larger diversified operation.
<b>Mulberry</b> ( <i>Morus spp.</i> )	Easily grown, very adaptable. Requires labor intensive picking + heavy pruning to maintain a suitable tree size for harvesting.	Wide range of well-drained soils. Full sun to part shade.	\$10/lb dried (retail)	Fresh berries have a short shelf life, good for local sales. Frozen + dried berries have larger markets.
<b>Nanking cherry</b> ( <i>Prunus tomentosa</i> )	A companion crop with beneficial ecological characteristics. Economic sustainability yet to be determined. Fruit is small with short shelf life.	Adaptable, likes well-drained soils. Full sun.	No developed commercial market.	Niche crop for local markets; part of a larger diversified operation.
<b>Seaberry</b> ( <i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i> )	Easy to grow, productive. Berry is a nutrient-dense superfood. Could be a problematic spreader. Spines make some varieties hard to harvest.	Widely adaptable. Tolerant of low fertility; moist to very dry; well-drained; pH of 5.5-7.0 to fix N.	\$1.50- \$4.50/lb	Popular in Europe + cosmetic industry; not widely used in US. Essential oil from seeds and berry pulp are the most valuable.



**The following sources were used in the creation of this document:**

Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (AgMRC)  
Cornell Cooperative Extension  
New Hampshire Agricultural Experiment Station  
PennState Extension  
Society of Ontario Nut Growers  
Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE)  
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**For an expanded list of Agroforestry Crops, please contact Jono Neiger: [jono@rdgland.com](mailto:jono@rdgland.com).**



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Draft Revised: February 5, 2020 9:07 AM