

Growing Wild

Strategies for restoring wildlife habitat and building plant-centered food systems in an age of climate disruption



Photo by Susan C. Morse

1st Edition

Growing Wild

The challenge of modern agriculture, and a new philosophical basis for meeting human needs

Nutshell

Caring for ALL animals; transcending and including the Sanctuary model

The benefits of wild-cultivated hybrid system

Beyond Foraging “conscious foraging”

The new human-animal relationship: The end of livestock

History

Basic Principles

Specific Strategies

Strategies for Carbon Sequestration: The importance of data and a scientific approach

Taking only what we need, using all that's given: a philosophical approach

Converting Old pastures and Fields

*Using time, natural succession and resident wildlife;
pasture as pollinator and small-animal habitat; pasture
as ecosystem*

General Concept

Observation over time

Pollinators

Natural succession

Wild plants are nutrient dense

Planned and wild resilience

Water movement

Specific Strategies

Establishing a Pattern: Wildlife use paths

What wildlife eat: trap crops

Setting Contour: The mowing regime

How to create edge—as much life as possible

Let successional species like willow, birch, poplar simply emerge and mow around these groupings. In flat areas, contour lines can be disrupted and mowings can occur around these pioneer species groupings.

What to plant

Brewing Crops

Juicing Crops

Storage Crops

Medicinal Crops

Leaf Crops

Herbs

Vegetables

Understory

Grafting crops onto wild rootstock

Capturing nutrients, directing traffic, using water

Bird habitat within the system: how broods cycle nutrients, how birds plant the system

The Importance of multi-age stands in pastures, orchards, and forests

Relationships in the landscape: examples of creature interactions

Native Plants

The role of predators: bear, coyote, fox, raptors, weasels, fisher, mink, otter, beaver.

Ramial wood: A fertility program

Winter Strategies

Establishment Strategies

The Ecology of Field Succession: Soils, Nutrients, Pollinators, Habitats

The Role of Wildlife in Resilient Food Systems

Rendering livestock obsolete?: the importance of creating wildlife habitat while growing food.

*The transformation of animal husbandry: restoring the wild, species care, proper stewardship of domestic breeds
Deer browsing, bird rearing, wild turkey, coyote, fox, vole, mouse, woodchuck, rabbit*

Mouse/Vole

Deer

Songbirds

Wild Turkey

Grouse

Rabbit

Rocks and Permanent structures within hedgerows

The Forest

Re-thinking the forest farming economy. Life in the woods. New Strategies for Food and Medicine. The pharmacy out back.

Water

Nutrients

Habitat

Wood + Water=Fungi

Managing Deadwood

A Plan for Woods Roads

Slash On Contour

A Sample Forest Management Plan

Poplar

Birch

Beech

Maple

Spruce
White Pine
Hemlock
Oak
Hickory
Chestnut
Ash
Basswood
Hop Hornbeam
Farmers of the forest

Field-Forest Edge Strategies: Farming the Edge

Bees and mycelium--the importance of rotting wood along field edges
Trees for wildlife rubs and snacks--Sue Morse
Rotational cutting: 4 purposes

Water systems

Ponds, wetland systems, capturing runoff for food production, the importance of planning for water fluctuation and climate change, chinampas

Roads as Productive Harvest Corridors--The Road as the Farm

Design parameters
Some possible sketches

Food and Fire

Local ingredients; global processes. How a new food culture can save the planet. How a new science of food must accompany land stewardship. Changing paradigms throughout the system. New strategies for using what's here.

A Global Gastronomy

Why we can't project the past onto the future: Eating limits

Quality Products: The spectrum of flavors in new plants and fungi

Umami: New techniques to achieve primal satisfaction

The importance of bacteria in the process of the food; Transformative Microbes

or: The Art of Fermentation

The Sensation of Ethics: How ethics influence flavor

Cheese does indeed grow on cheese: Pine Nuts, Hazelnuts make superior cheese.

Cooking with wood, engaging the forest, using everything.

Kitchen re-design—designing energy transfers, re-embracing historical wisdom around fermentation, wood cooking, natural refrigeration, and electricity.

Inexplicable Harmony: using unfamiliar flavors in harmony with the familiar

mullein, green tea, boneset, meadowsweet, mugwort, cleavers,

The best teachers

Resources

Culinary Principles

One Plant, many preparations

raw, cooked, juiced, pickled, caramelized, immature, fermented, aged, mature, flowers—different flavors emerge with different treatments and different stages of plant growth

Cooking with fire

Orchard Plants

How to work with succession to introduce cultivated plants

The importance of support and pioneer species

Planting healthy rootstocks resistant to browse (aka hawthorn, possibly mountain ash, pin cherry), to later top-work with cultivated plants.

Planting a seed source: have

Timing is everything

Our Plant List

Using wild rootstocks and indigenous plants

Plants in the dripline as a living mulch

Pioneer/Support species as vertical support for vining plants

The importance of Pioneer species for larger acreages

Building mycelial/mycorrhizal networks above and below ground

Nutrients: In-situ composting

Products

Opportunities for innovation in the marketplace.

Polyculture to polyproducts to synergistic producers.

Toward a value-centered economy

Notes towards a new economy

We offer this stewardship model to land owners, we train and mentor those who want to implement on others' land.

What is Land?

Developing an appreciation for what is 'here'

Smaller, multiple yields: polyculture to polyproducts from the same land base

Sample products and areas of specialization: Forest

Which annuals to grow

Sample products and areas of specialization: Field and Edge

Nettle

Water kefir, ginger bugs, probiotic brews: herbs, mushrooms, berries

Wild-crab Hard Ciders

Milkweed as vegetable

Thistles—cucumber-like juice vegetable blended and strained

Basswood Leaves as wraps

Plant List

Nursery for all Plants

Food-Medicine: Cannabis: medicinal, for women, for pain, leaving the pharmaceutical industry behind

Sanctuary: Eggs for pet food, wool from sheep?

Shared processing area for diverse producers within a polyculture

Plant & Fungi List with nutritional and tasting notes, harvest notes, ethnobotany, history of use, processing traditions, preparation suggestions

From Consumer to Partner

Transforming participation in the food economy

Food should be free or expensive—depending on YOUR involvement

“Take this food, leave us some, ensure future harvests”

The “Free” Model

The Economics of Transition

Moving from livestock to wildlife in plant-centered agriculture

The role of sanctuaries in the farm transition movement
Sanctuaries as systems; beyond the warehouse and zoo models
Subsidizing sanctuaries : the key to a transitional nutrient economy
Wildlife rehabilitation can replace sanctuaries when sanctuaries are no longer needed, and wildlife rehab should receive major funding. Wildlife are inherently 'free'—we do not use them. We honor wildness.

Equipment

The equipment we use: 2 middle-aged women on 1300 acres in the US Northeast.

Small tractor, front-mounted disk mower, front-mounted flail mower, front mounted finishing mower, rotary spader, front buck rake.
Skid-excavator, mecalac, with tilt-rotator and tree shear
Kubota tractor with forks, bucket loader, rear blade
Plow truck
Gear and Clothing for cold temperate climates

Criteria for Land Aquisition and Investment

Steps after acquisition

Re-imagining Conservation

“Conservation” means more than ‘the lack of development’, Proactive conservation plans for land to sequester carbon, Re-thinking recreation, Human impacts on wildlife, Beyond human entitlement

Leases, Land-Shares, Co-Ownership: Problems and Opportunities

Financial, Tax, and Legal Planning for the Long Term: reforming models of the past

The absolute necessity for an interdisciplinary land-investment approach to achieve success

Professionalism

How to choose the right team

Working with land stewards: Your options

Subcontractors

Vetting people saves \$

Specialist Producers: Fruitful alliances

The importance of contracts

The Process and Importance of Undomestication

The Stewardship Year

Our own spreadsheet of tasks and harvests: Northeastern USA, Vermont

Woods work: firewood, mushroom wood, trail work

Field edge pruning

Mowing regime

Mushroom Harvests

Wild edibles harvest schedule

Staples: Apples, Acorns, Seaberries

A New Model of Healthcare

Some ideas

Taxing unhealthy foods

Investing in health-food systems

Divest from entropy: an investment criteria checklist

Insurance-food system building: insurance cards buy \$X of fresh produce annually as a matter of prescription, this builds local food economy, prevents chronic illness.
Medical insurance isn't health care, how to change this?
An economy of health

Resources