What is forest farming?

Forest Farming, or Multi-Story Cropping, is a distinctive approach to land management that combines management practices of conventional forestry with those of small scale farming or gardening to attain an environmentally and economically sustainable land-use system.

Typically, a Forest Farming system is established by thinning an existing woodland or plantation to leave the best canopy trees for continued timber production and to create the appropriate conditions that favor the understory crop.

Although some woodland owners pursue Forest Farming as a source of income, many people enjoy collecting or growing non-timber forest products as part of their cultural and family tradition, or as a recreational outing.

In Forest Farming, high-value specialty crops or special forest products are cultivated or grown under the protection of a managed forest canopy. Crops like ginseng, shiitake mushrooms and decorative ferns are sold for medicinal, culinary or ornamental uses.

Forest Farming provides added income while the canopy trees are growing and developing into timber, veneer, and other solid wood products.

Fruits:
- pawpaw
- currants
- elderberry
- serviceberry
- blackberry
- huckleberry

Other food crops:
- ramps (wild leeks)
- syrups
- honey
- mushrooms
- other edible roots

Other products: (mulch, decorative, crafts, dyes):
- pine straw
- willow twigs
- vines
- beargrass
- ferns
- pine cones
- moss

Native ornamentals:
- rhododendron
- forsythia
- flowering dogwood

Medicinal herbs:
- ginseng
- black cohosh
- golden seal
- bloodroot
- Pacific yew
- mayapple
- saw palmetto

Nuts:
- black walnut
- hazelnut
- hickory
- beechnut