



## **Fruits – and nuts – of the forest:**

### **Farmer's fruity tree crop to set taste buds tingling**

A Nottinghamshire silvoarable farmer is setting taste buds tingling by creating an edible woodland with the Woodland Trust.

David Rose is turning six-and a half hectares of arable land at Home Farm, Screveton, into a flavoursome feast by planting more than 4,000 fruit and nut trees.

David has been helped in his edible endeavour by the Woodland Trust, which has provided advice on species, a scheme design and subsidised trees.

Woodland Creation Adviser Stuart Holm said:

“It’s involved a lot of head scratching as although we are used to creating woodland this is the first time we’ve created an edible plot of this size. It was important that every tree was UK grown and sourced and we have achieved that, although it was a particular challenge getting hold of the quantities of sweet chestnut needed. Fortunately we have a very good supplier who was able to graft on to root stock from the UK to create semi-naturalised scions which we can plant out next year.”

Everything planted will produce a crop or bring benefits to the soil. Alder will pull nitrogen from the air and into the roots to act as a fertiliser, as will black locust.

Fruit species include apples, pears, cherry, wild cherry, plum, currants, gooseberry, raspberry, damson, whitebeam, elder, mulberry, wild service tree, apricot, quince, lime, Japanese silverberry, rowan, dog rose, sea buckthorn, medlar, hawthorn and crab apple.

Nut trees being planted include sweet chestnut, walnut, hazel and almond.

Half the trees will be arriving in early December and will be planted by community volunteers and users of the EcoCentre, Home Farm’s education centre which aims to educate and inform people about what is happening in the working countryside. The second half will be planted at the same time next year.

David intends the woodland to be a real community effort, offering volunteers the chance to plant, tend and harvest the crop as well as have a say in how it should be used. He also hopes to offer creative and practical courses, including art-based sessions and tree identification workshops.

David has been working with the Trust for the past four years. He has planted a number of trees to extend existing woodland and created a tree-lined labyrinth. He has also successfully diversified into alley cropping – planting rows of apple trees among his arable crop with the aim of increasing total yield and improving economic returns. Not only will the alley cropping produce an extra source of income, but the trees are also protecting and nourishing the soil, attracting pollinators and encouraging local wildlife.

He said:

“Farming is going through such changes and there needs to be a way that smaller or medium sized farms can have an opportunity to have a sustainable business.

“I believe that agroforestry gives that opportunity to produce food in a way that maximises the potential of every acre. Over the last four years the Woodland Trust has helped take the environmental management of our farm to a new level with the creation of a silvoarable scheme which will provide economic, environmental and social benefits to both the farm and the wider community for years to come. This latest project is another great example of how their expertise will help the farm grow.”

David’s new venture is expected to bear fruit in five years while the first nut crop will take seven to ten years to come to fruition.

In addition to the conservation and wildlife benefits trees bring to local environments, research shows that having trees in the right places can bring significant benefits to farms. For a free, on-site, no-obligation consultation, farmers should call 0330 333 5303 or email [plant@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:plant@woodlandtrust.org.uk)

**The Woodland Trust** is the largest woodland conservation charity in the UK. It has over 500,000 supporters. It wants to see a UK rich in native woods and trees for people and wildlife.

The Trust has three key aims: i) protect ancient woodland which is rare, unique and irreplaceable, ii) restoration of damaged ancient woodland, bringing precious pieces of our natural history back to life, iii) plant native trees and woods with the aim of creating resilient landscapes for people and wildlife.

Established in 1972, the Woodland Trust now has over 1,000 sites in its care covering over 22,500 hectares. Access to its woods is free.

The Woodland Trust is one of 46 voluntary organisations that make up Wildlife and Countryside Link, which is working to set out a vision which delivers benefits for farming as well as for our natural environment, in order to contribute towards a more sustainable agricultural sector.