Economical value of forest edges

Mutually beneficial relationship between humans and nature

Sudden and straighten forest edges, where forests start with a dense, shady forest stands on one side but open space on the other side consisting of a monoculture provides less ecological niches then gradually built forest edge.

Bees are the most important pollinators for agriculture crops, but the cultivated plants rarely belong to a species that would provide nectar all year round. In this respect forest edges can give significant input.

Insects living in the forest edge habitat pollinate agricultural crops. In some cases they do what bees are unable to do, for example, bumble-bees pollinate red clover. Some of the insects work as pest controllers, for example, ladybugs feed on greenflies.

Forest edge rich in blossoming plants and created with gradient is an important source of nectar. A 200m long forest edge can produce many kilos of honey annually. If among the trees are also linden trees the yield of honey can reach even hundreds of kilos.

You can enrich the fodder base for your livestock with fruits, leaves and branches by including forest edge in the pastures, thus increase the quality of the meat production.

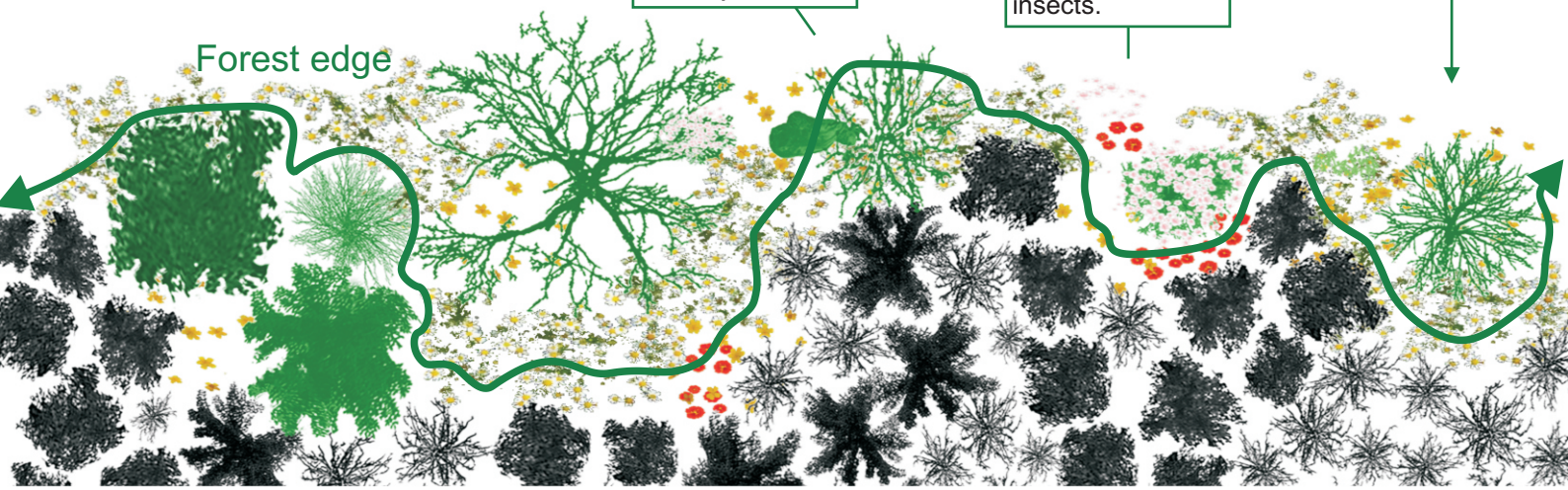
Greater amounts of birds in the forest edge helps control agricultural pests.

Diversity of insects living in the forest edge ensures feeding sources for greater amounts of birds.

If the forest edge is gradual, livestock will help maintain it by grazing.

Forest edge rich in fruits and seeds ar also rich in diversity of birds.

Wide, with blossoming trees and shrubs rich forest edge increases the diversity of insects.



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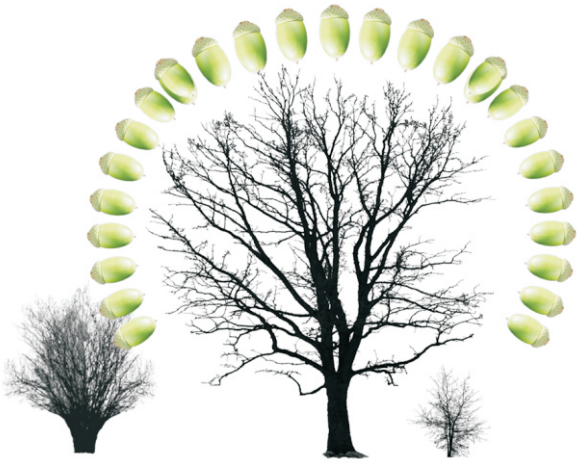
30 % ~ 67 kg

Nutritional value of the acorns equals to the one of grain – gorgeous, productive oak trees are valuable supplement to the fodder in pastures. The farmer does not need to by it, it grows in nature. The herd can be seen as a tool for helping keep trees free from competitive shrubs and trees. If the oak tree is shaded by unwanted shrubs and trees, only 30% of its crown will be green or even less and the yeld of acorns will be small.

10 oaks * 67 kg = 670 kg



100 % ~ 200 kg

A mature oak with a healthy crown may produce up to 200 kg of acorns. If we clear away from ten oaks all competitative shrubs and trees then the productivity of oak trees would increase from 30% to 100% and the total gain would be 1,3 tonnes of acorns. In terms of nutritional value it equals the same amount of barley.

10 oaks * 200 kg = 2000 kg

Rowan-trees and crab apple trees enrich fodder bases of livestock. They are also great nectar plants – from 1 ha trees one can yield approximately 30 kg honey. We see these trees more rarely because they get overgrown by forest. Even though there are plenty of rowan trees and crab apple trees in the underwood, they are overshdded and produce an insignificant part of the nectar and fruits they normally would produce if growing in the sparse forestedge.

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