

The “**Missouri Black Walnut Initiative**” is a promotion by the *Missouri Chapter, Walnut Council* to encourage establishing and managing black walnut growth on idled acres of well-suited soils. Walnut trees could become a significant source of income for your family and future generations. Well-managed walnut trees are like a savings account when there is need. The long-term outlook for future market value of walnut products is very good.

Black Walnut (*Juglans nigra* L.), a valuable fine hardwood tree, may be growing voluntarily on your best soils in small, isolated areas that once produced excellent row crops. Walnut trees can be established in recently idled areas to produce a cash crop for future generations growing a “*woody portfolio*” for your heirs!

The increase in width of farm equipment resulted in many small, isolated areas of prime farmland soils not being planted. Those sites can be *VERY* productive growing one of the most valuable tree species known in the world...Eastern Black Walnut! These trees may be growing on **your** land already just waiting for your care!



Black walnut **native growing areas** are concentrated in the eastern United States, with the highest production in Missouri.



Maturing black walnuts along Auxvasse Creek, Callaway County



Walnut saw logs ready for milling

Missouri has 41 million black walnut trees 5” or greater in diameter; more than twice as many as the second ranked state. Twenty percent of all native range walnut is grown in Missouri, with more walnut timber than any other area in the world! And 75% of all native black walnut nuts purchased commercially are grown here as either “wild run” or “improved cultivars”.

What makes black walnut so famous and unique of all hardwoods? **It performs very well in 8 hardwood criteria:**

- Wood color and texture
- Workability
- Strength
- Steam bending
- Easily air or kiln dried
- Minimal shrinkage during drying
- Decay resistance
- Commercial use, grading, & value

These criteria keep black walnut demand high and world market prices strong.



Plain-sliced Veneer



Quartered Veneer

The beautiful chocolate colored wood is easy to work with and has a natural satin finish.

Walnut saw logs suitable for the sawmill are generally sawn into boards of standard thicknesses. The lumber is then edged, steamed, and dried. Markets for walnut lumber have worldwide appeal. Walnut is used in the production of furniture, interior cabinets, flooring, paneling and specialty products like bowls, plaques, picture frames, and gun stocks.

The very best walnut logs are graded as **veneer logs** and sliced into thin sheets. The main criteria for A-grade veneer logs are typically a minimum of 18-19” in diameter at breast height (*dbh*) with at least 8’6” of clear wood (no branches or scars from lost branches). As the length and diameter increase, the value of the log increases exponentially. An 18” *dbh* tree with an 8’6” veneer butt log is worth about \$700 while a 26” *dbh* tree yielding a 12’6” veneer butt log, a second veneer log and two saw logs is worth about \$1,800. Veneer logs can be worth ten times more than the price of saw logs. A few hours of care and pruning trees when they are less than 25’ tall can greatly increase the equity in your black walnuts!



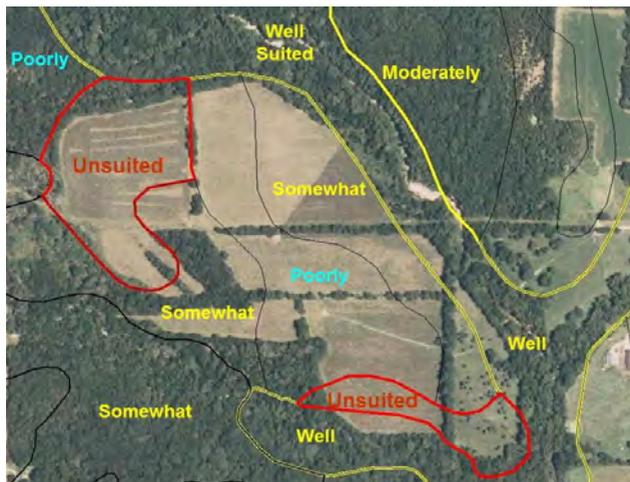
Soil Suitability is Critical

The **growing site** is the most important factor in establishing and managing black walnut. Walnut grows best on lower slopes, stream valleys, or isolated areas along a creek that have good soil moisture, deep (at least 60 inches) soil profiles, loamy soil textures, and a neutral pH. Our best sites are deep alluvial soils along creeks and deep loess soils on the Missouri River Hills mapped as **“Well-Suited”**.

Poor sites are soils with gravel, bedrock, or hardpan restrictions, high water tables, and wetness during the growing season mapped as **“Poorly-Suited”**.

Fields with good site conditions, full sunlight and no existing tree canopy offer excellent places to begin a new walnut stand or to manage existing walnut trees.

Refer to the Web Soil Survey **“Black Walnut Soil Suitability Index”** before planting walnut. You can easily produce a map for your farm online to determine if your soils are suitable.



To determine the suitability of your soils visit:
<https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>

Growing Quality Walnut Trees

- Look for walnut saplings on recently idled land; plant nuts or seedlings in open areas.
- Exclude livestock from the site.
- Deaden trees like fast growing sycamore and soft maple so the young walnuts are taller than competing trees and brush for at least 15 years.
- Use herbicides to control grass and broadleaf vegetation 4' around the base of walnut trees for 3 or more years.
- Use herbicides to control grapevines and invasive species.
- Prune during the dormant season to a central leader; ideally, remove lateral branches 1.5" or less in diameter.
- Thin the stand to reduce crown competition. Use crop tree management to periodically release the best trees.
Manage the competition!

\$\$\$ What's Your Walnut Worth?

The value of your timber depends on species, grade, location, market prices, and the harvest season. Trees growing on well-suited soils could be harvest ready in 50-70 years. On a constant dollar basis they may be worth \$25,000-\$60,000 or more per acre assuming 30 crop trees per acre at harvest time.

“Missouri Timber Price Trends” shows the regional value of hardwood timber. Using the services of a professional forester when selling your timber can pay big dividends. Always advertise for bids, use a timber sale contract, and schedule harvests according to your woodland management plan.

Managing & Marketing Your Trees (Where to Find Help)

Even with the best soil for black walnut you may need technical and financial assistance to establish, manage and harvest your timber. Help may be available from:

Technical:

- Forest & Woodland Association of Missouri (FWAM)
- MDC - Division of Forestry
- Missouri Chapter, Walnut Council
- Missouri Consulting Foresters Assoc.
- Missouri Nut Growers' Association
- Missouri Society of American Foresters (MoSAF)
- MU Extension-Forestry
- MU Center for Agroforestry
- USDA Forest Service (USFS)

Financial:

- MDC - Division of Forestry
- MDNR-Soil & Water Conservation Program
- USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Funding for this Initiative provided by the Conservation Federation of Missouri's David Risberg Memorial

To learn more about the Black Walnut Initiative:

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A Missouri Black Walnut Initiative

Converting Idle Acres into Land Equity



Provide long-term farm income that will benefit future generations.