

Brigalow belah scrub



Landform	Undulating plains (1–3%) and short footslopes to 8% associated with low hills and ridges.
Woody vegetation	Brigalow open forest and brigalow in association with belah, poplar box or bauhinia.
Expected pasture composition	<i>* Denotes non-native "Expected Pasture Composition" species.</i>
Preferred	Queensland bluegrass, buffel grass*.
Intermediate	Slender chloris, early spring grass, twirly windmill grass, brigalow grass, Warrego summer grass.
Non-preferred	White speargrass, rat's tail couch.
Legumes	Rhynchosia, gilgai darling pea.
Suitable sown pastures	Buffel grass, Bambatsi, creeping bluegrass, Gatton panic, desmanthus, medic (barrel, burr), Caatinga stylo, leucaena. Short term (2 to 5 years) lucerne, burgundy bean, snail medic.
Introduced weeds	Bladder ketmia, parthenium, Noogoora burr, Bathurst burr, prickly pear.
Soils	Brown or grey cracking clay (brown vertosol).
Description	Surface: Finely structured self-mulching; Surface texture: medium clay; Subsoil texture: heavy clay.
Water availability	Low
Rooting depth	Moderate
Fertility	Low to moderate total nitrogen; low to moderate phosphorus.
Salinity	Medium to very highly saline.

Sodicity

Subsoils are sodic to strongly sodic.

pH

Surface mildly alkaline; subsoils strongly alkaline; deep subsoils strongly acid.

Utilisation

30%

Enterprise

Finishing

Land use and management recommendations

- Most areas of brigalow belah scrub have been cleared and established to improved pastures.
- Retain trees on beds and banks of watercourses to minimise erosion.
- Maintain vegetation belts for wildlife habitats and corridors.
- Suitable for long-term cropping – grain and fodder crops.

Land use limitations

- Regrowth of some species.
- Surface sealing soils.
- Lower subsoils are strongly sodic and very dispersible with medium to very high levels of salinity – these conditions reduce the actual rooting depth and hence the available water and nutrients.
- Dense stands of burrs (galvanised) and broad-leaved plants (mintweed, pigweed, darling pea) may limit pasture growth, productivity and be toxic to stock.

Conservation features and related management

- Brigalow, particularly in association with belah, provides potential habitat for a wide range of rare and threatened fauna. These include birds (e.g. glossy black-cockatoo, painted honeyeater, black-chinned honeyeater); mammals (greater long-eared bat, little pied bat); reptiles (woma python, golden-tailed gecko, brigalow scaly-foot); frogs; and even some insects (imperial hairstreak butterfly).
- These areas have a very high bird diversity (e.g. yellow-tailed black-cockatoo, blue bonnet, red-winged parrot, many honeyeaters, thornbills, speckled warbler, spotted bowerbird), and a high diversity of reptiles (e.g. velvet geckos, slider skinks (*Lerista* spp.), striped skinks (*Ctenotus* spp.).
- Some areas are prone to scalding and many areas have been, extensively cleared for cropping and pasture. Use of a combination of soil conservation techniques will help minimise soil erosion and scalding.
- Introduced pasture grasses (e.g. buffel or green panic) may invade native pastures, increase fuel loads in the ground layer and make them sensitive to fire damage.
- Control of feral animals such as pigs and foxes can help to protect native wildlife in this habitat.

Regional ecosystems

11.3.1, 11.9.5, 11.9.5a, 11.9.6.

Land units; Map units; land resource areas, Soil associations

Land Units (Galloway *et al* 1974) 40, 41, 43, 53; Map Units (DPI 1984) 5, 6, 7, 9 (123, 124, 131); LRA, Soil Associations (DPI 1996) Brigalow Rises, Ulimaroa 5a/5b/5c; LRA (DPI 1987) 2 - Brigalow Uplands.