

# Wooded downs



<b>Landform</b>	Flat to gently undulating plains (slopes up to 3%) of the 'rolling downs' in the north. Wooded downs are often associated with open downs and are commonly fringed on the upper slopes by gidgee lands.
<b>Woody vegetation</b>	Boree, boonaree, myall, silver-leaved ironbark open woodlands to bauhinia, vine tree, ironwood and eastern dead finish wooded open tussock grassland. Shrub layers are usually present and may include gidgee, whitewood, false sandalwood, leopardwood, mimosa bush and gundabluie. Ground cover is variable and fluctuates between forb-dominated and grass-dominated community.
<b>Expected pasture composition</b>	<i>* Denotes non-native "Expected Pasture Composition" species.</i>
Preferred	Mitchell (hoop, curly, bull) grasses, desert bluegrass, buffel grass* (naturalised), Queensland bluegrass, early spring grass.
Intermediate	Curly windmill grass, yabila, katoora, fairy/yakka grass.
Non-preferred	Wiregrasses (e.g. feathertop, white speargrass).
Annual grasses	Button grass, weeping lovegrass, small burr grass.
Common forbs	Giant pigweed, red spinach, paper daisy, saltbushes, daisy burrs, burrs, black roly poly, soft roly poly, down's nutgrass, caustic weed, rhynchosia, mintweed, Australian carrot, flaxweed, tarvine, sidas (e.g. corrugated, high, silver).
<b>Suitable sown pastures</b>	Buffel grass, old man saltbush, Turanti barley Mitchell, Yanda curly Mitchell.
<b>Introduced weeds</b>	Prickly acacia, parkinsonia, spiked malvastrum.
<b>Soil</b>	Moderately deep to deep, sometimes shallow, grey and brown cracking clays; prominent linear gilgais on grey clays in some areas.

Description	<b>Surface:</b> Variable scattered ironstone pebbles, soft self-mulching soils, shallow soils can be hard-setting; <b>Surface texture:</b> medium and heavy clays <b>Subsoil texture:</b> medium to heavy clays; lime and gypsum are usually present in profile.
Features	Soft self-mulching or hard-setting; ironstone maybe present at base of profile.
Water availability	High
Rooting depth	Mostly moderately deep (>75 cm), sodicity and salinity may reduce effective depth.
Infiltration	High when dry, becoming rapidly less as soils become saturated.
Fertility	Low carbon and nitrogen; low phosphorus.
Salinity	Low to very low at surface increasing with depth.
Sodicity	Non-sodic at surface becoming sodic at depth.
pH	Moderately to strongly alkaline throughout.
Utilisation	20%
Enterprise	Mixed cattle and sheep breeding.
Land use and management recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tree densities are sufficiently sparse as to not interfere with pasture growth, and provide valuable drought protein reserves, and shade and protection for animals on adjacent open downs.</li> <li>• Generally highly productive and stable lands if native pastures are maintained and conservatively stocked.</li> <li>• Suitable for continuous winter and summer cropping in more easterly areas that receive reliable rainfall.</li> </ul>
Land use limitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to low levels of organic matter cultivated soils are prone to water erosion on slopes &gt;1%. Use of broad-based contour banks, maintenance of naturally grassed waterways and conservation cropping techniques are needed to control soil runoff and erosion.</li> <li>• Coarse-surface structure may limit germination of pasture species, summer crops and small-seeded crops.</li> <li>• Little regeneration of boree but seedling regeneration of gidgee has extended onto adjacent grasslands and can limit productivity.</li> </ul>
Conservation features and related management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The wooded grasslands provide habitat for the seed or insect eating ground dwelling birds (e.g. singing bushlark, little button-quail, Australian bustard, ground cuckoo-shrike), or those birds that feed on the ground but use tree hollows for nesting (e.g. budgerigar and cockatiel). The cracking soils also provide habitat for many skinks, snakes and small mammals (e.g. Collett's snake, striped faced dunnart, narrow-nosed planigale).</li> <li>• Maintenance of ground cover in these wooded grasslands is important to minimise risk of sheet and gully erosion, reduce runoff, improve water quality and protect the wildlife habitat.</li> <li>• Vigilance in controlling weed and feral animals can help prevent the degradation of these areas.</li> </ul>
Regional ecosystems	4.9.6, 4.9.7a, 6.9.2.