

Wooded downs



Landform

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.

Woody vegetation

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.

Expected pasture composition

* Denotes non-native "Expected Pasture Composition" species.

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).

Suitable sown pastures

Buffel grass, old man saltbush, Turanti barley Mitchell, Yanda curly Mitchell.

Introduced weeds

Prickly acacia, parkinsonia, spiked malvastrum.

Soil

Moderately deep to deep, sometimes shallow, grey and brown cracking clays; prominent linear gilgais on grey clays in some areas.

Description

Surface: Variable scattered ironstone pebbles, soft self-mulching soils, shallow soils can be hard-setting; **Surface texture:** medium and heavy clays **Subsoil texture:** medium to heavy clays; lime and gypsum are usually present in profile.

Features
 Water availability
 Rooting depth
 Infiltration
 Fertility
 Salinity
 Sodicty
 pH

Long-term carrying capacity information (A condition)

Soft self-mulching or hard-setting; ironstone maybe present at base of profile.
 High
 Mostly moderately deep (>75 cm), sodicity and salinity may reduce effective depth.
 High when dry, becoming rapidly less as soils become saturated.
 Low carbon and nitrogen; low phosphorus.
 Low to very low at surface increasing with depth.
 Non-sodic at surface becoming sodic at depth.
 Moderately to strongly alkaline throughout.

Based on fully watered area for 1AE = 450 kg animal consuming 8kg DM/day				
Median annual rainfall 333 – 494 mm				
Pasture type	Median tree cover (TBA m ² /ha) (FPC %)	Median annual pasture growth (DM kg/ha)	Safe annual utilisation pasture growth (%)	LTCC (ha/AE)
Native species	0 TBA/FPC	960 - 1780	20%	8.2 - 15
	4 TBA 10 FPC	470 - 1280	20%	11 – 31

**Enterprise
 Land use and management recommendations**

Mixed cattle and sheep breeding.

- 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.
- Generally highly productive and stable lands if native pastures are maintained and conservatively stocked.
- Suitable for continuous winter and summer cropping in more easterly areas that receive reliable rainfall.

Land use limitations

- Due to low levels of organic matter cultivated soils are prone to water erosion on slopes >1%. Use of broad-based contour banks, maintenance of naturally grassed waterways and conservation cropping techniques are needed to control soil runoff and erosion.
- Coarse-surface structure may limit germination of pasture species, summer crops and small-seeded crops.
- Little regeneration of boree but seedling regeneration of gidgee has extended onto adjacent grasslands and can limit productivity.

Conservation features and related management

- 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).
- 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.
- Vigilance in controlling weed and feral animals can help prevent the degradation of these areas.

Regional Ecosystems

4.9.6, 4.9.7a, 6.9.2.

MU11 Wooded downs



Area of land type in region: 0.2%
Median rainfall (region): 253 – 504 mm
Average rainfall (region): 299 – 533 mm
Area of land type with FPC: 15%
Median FPC: 10%
Median TBA: 4 m²/ha



**Queensland
Government**