

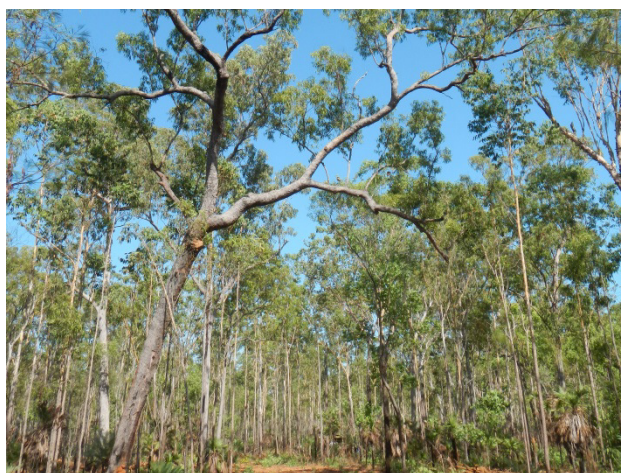
Native Vegetation in the NT | factsheet

The Northern Territory is covered with native vegetation over most of its 1.35 million square kilometres. Vegetation types vary according to rainfall, topography, soils, human modification and other factors. For economically and ecologically sustainable land management, it is essential to have a good understanding of vegetation resources.

Extensive Vegetation Types

Eucalypt open forests and woodlands

Eucalypt open forests and woodlands cover much of the northern half of the Territory. Often referred to as savannah, they consist of trees (mostly eucalypts) over grassland. The main land use is pastoralism followed by Indigenous.



Spinifex grasslands

Spinifex grasslands cover much of the southern half of the Territory, mostly as open grasslands. They can have a sparse, short tree or shrub layer of Acacias, Eucalypts or other trees. The main land-use is Indigenous.

Blacksoil grasslands

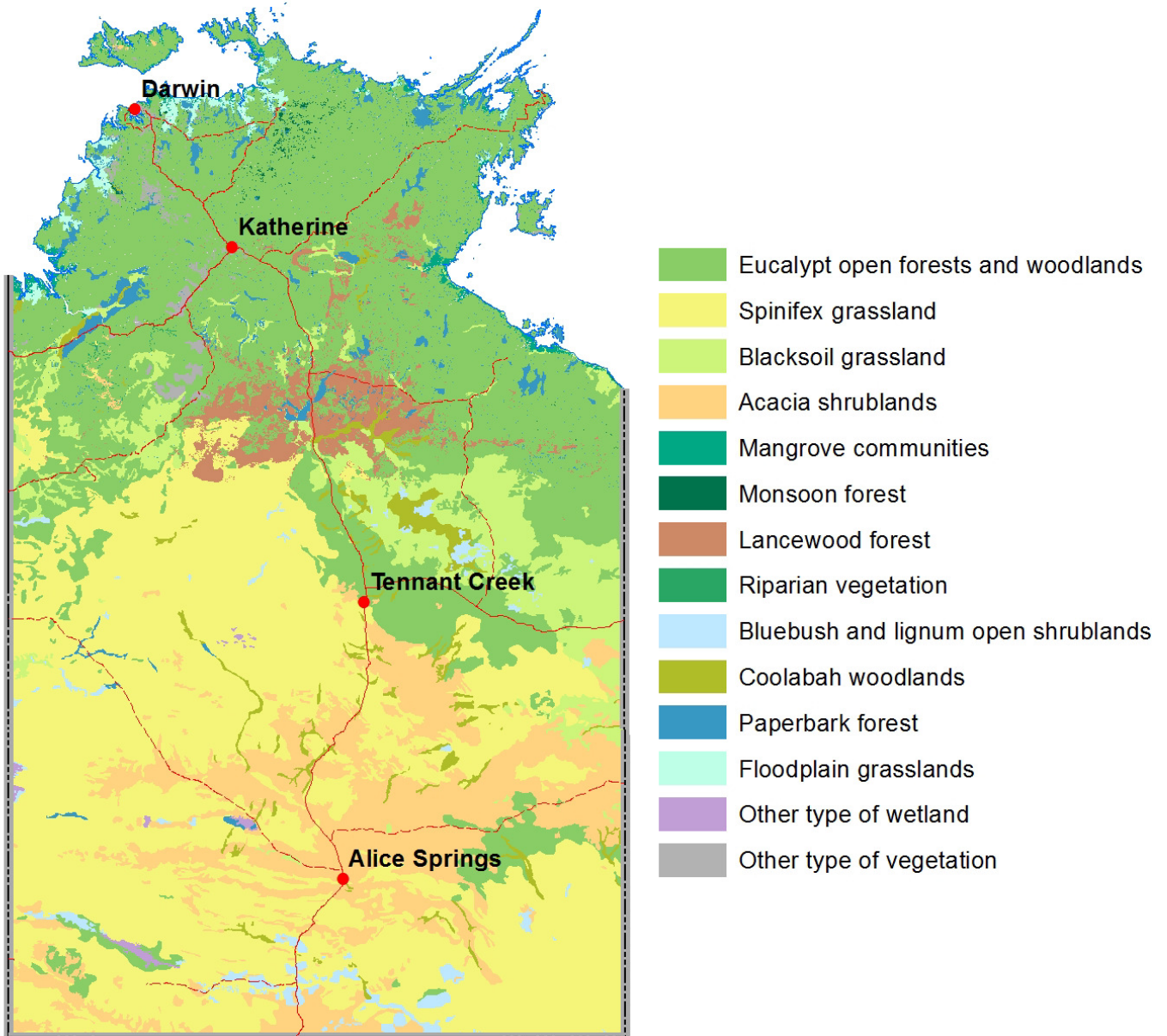
These grasslands occupy extensive areas on clay soils in the Barkly Tablelands and plains of the Ord Victoria region. They are dominated by grasses that are very important to pastoralism, such as Mitchell Grasses.



Acacia shrublands

Acacia shrublands (largely Mulga) occupy large areas in the southern part of the NT plus some more patchy areas in the north (other Acacia species). Trees are usually sparsely spaced over grasses.

Map of Vegetation Types in the Northern Territory



Other Vegetation Types

Mangrove communities

The NT has some of the most extensive mangrove stands in Australia, occurring along tidal rivers and creeks. They are highly variable, including vegetation types from tall closed forests to low open woodland and salt marsh. They provide spawning and nursery areas for many marine species.



Monsoon forests

Several types of monsoon forests occur in small patches in the Top End of the NT. They have the highest number of plant species of any vegetation type in the NT. Wet monsoon forest occurs along streams and in other wet areas. Dry monsoon forests and vine thickets occur in fire-protected pockets. This type of vegetation is usually retained for its high conservation value and is prone to degradation by fire.

Lancewood forests

Open forest and woodlands of lancewood and bullwaddy occur on the Sturt Plateau. They contain a sparse understorey of grasses and herbs.



Riparian vegetation

Riparian vegetation occupies small, usually linear, areas along river and stream banks and levees. It can be highly variable and includes monsoon forest, sedgeland, grasslands, and woodlands of various species including paperbarks and river red gum. This vegetation is usually conserved for stream bank protection and wildlife habitat.

Wetlands

Wetland communities occur in areas that are inundated for extended periods, including swamps, drainage areas, lagoons and floodplains. In the Top End they are inundated for several months every year. In the more arid south they are dry most of the time and fill with water only infrequently following significant rain. They have high conservation value and some are internationally-recognised Ramsar wetlands.



Wetland vegetation types vary and include:



Bluebush and lignum open shrublands

Open shrublands of northern bluebush occur in inland areas such as the Barkly Tablelands. Bluebush is highly palatable to cattle.



Coolabah woodlands

Coolabah woodlands grow on swamps and river channels across much of the Territory. The main land use is pastoralism.



Paperbark forests

Paperbark forests occur in relatively small areas in the Top End of the NT on floodplains, swamps or drainage flats. The forests are typically inundated for several months each year; most having flood marks on the tree trunks. These unique forests are usually retained for their high conservation value.

Floodplain grasslands

Extensive floodplains occur in the Top End around the lower reaches of large river systems. They are dominated by grasses and sedges and provide important habitat for many species, especially birds. They are primarily used for the pastoral industry and also for conservation, tourism, and Indigenous uses.

