# SEASONAL TRENDS IN SCRUB MOISTURE CONTENT

by J. McCormick

During the summer of 1965-66, a study was made of the variation in moisture content of five scrub species. This study was carried out during the period from September 1965 through to March 1966, sampling being done weekly at 0:900 hours on each sampling day.

The species studied were, Lasiopetalum floribundum, Acacia pulchella, Phyllanthus calycinus, Dryandra nivea, and Bossiaea aquifolium. Of these species, only Phyllanthus calycinus gave atypical results because of the tendency for this species to be deciduous at this time of the year.

The samples collected showed no sustained significant drying trend throughout the summer period, as will be seen from the graphs, but the following comments on individual species will help to explain the apparent changes in moisture content for each species.

Lasiopetalum floribundum.

This plant exhibited new leaf formation from September to November, and thus the moisture content remained almost stable.

Acacia pulchella.

A partial leaf drop occurred in September, just before flowering commenced. From October onwards, new leaf development took place, and by the end of January, moisture content began to fall.

Phyllanthus calycinus.

This plant bears a healthy leaf flush in Springtime, but sheds its leaves throughout the dry season, until in late February, few leaves are evident, save on the growing tips. This factor is, no doubt largely responsible for the long drying trend indicated by the graph.

Dryandra nivea.

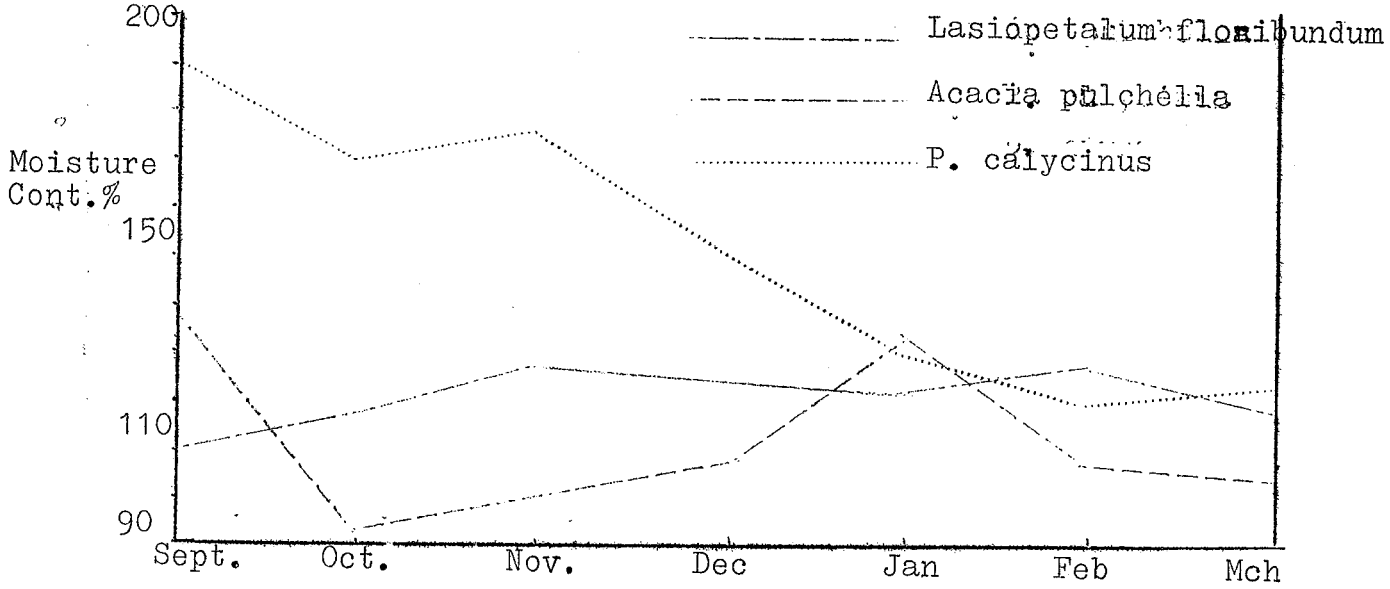
This species also has new leaf formation during the period from September to November, thereafter a slow drying trend is indicated by the curves.

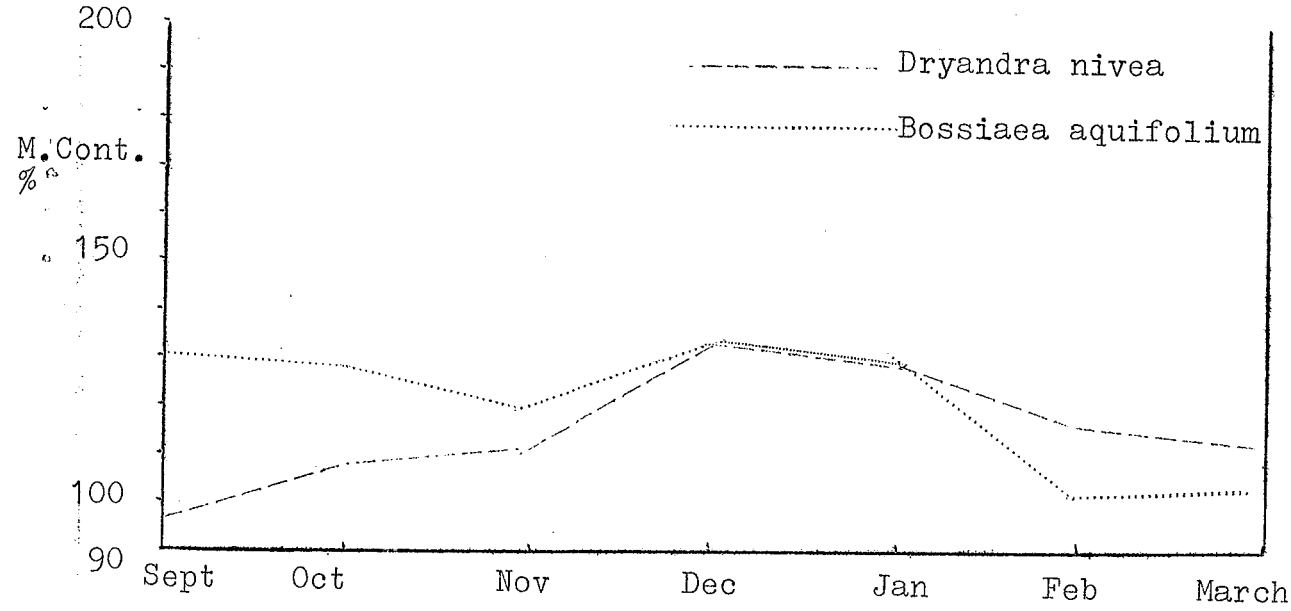
Bossiaea aquifolia.

A thinning out of the leaves was observed from October to November, followed by new leaf formation in late November and in December. After this leaf growth ceased, a drying trend is indicated by the graph.

Conclusions.

Each of the five species sampled indicate, to varying degrees, that some form of Moisture Content Drop does occur from the December-January period, and from such information as has been gathered, it would appear that during the Autumn burning period, the moisture content of the scrub types considered might well be lower than in any other season.


200
150
110
90
Moisture Cont.%
Lasiopetalum floribundum
Acacia pulchella
P. calycinus
Sept.
Oct.
Nov.
Dec
Jan
Feb
Mch


200
150
100
90
M. Cont. %
Dryandra nivea
Bossiaea aquifolium
Sept
Oct
Nov
Dec
Jan
Feb
March