

MAINTENANCE OF PLANT DIVERSITY THROUGH BURNING SPINIFEX: WHAT
ARE THE PARAMETERS?

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Some pastoralists in the Meekatharra-Wiluna area of Western Australia include spinifex burning in their program. For non-spinifex regrowth to be encouraged, the time of year and frequency of fire must be considered. If burning is so frequent that long-lived perennial plants do not have the chance to seed before being burnt, the range of post-burn species may be decreased to the detriment of the pastoralists.

Deferment of grazing is necessary for assured establishment of new seedlings of any species. For populations to be maintained of any short-lived palatable species, post-fire grazing must be deferred until seeds have been dropped.

Some consideration is given to what the non-spinifex plants may require to survive fire regimes and grazing.

A way to use the information in pastoral practice is then suggested, but the management of access and deferment need to be resolved.