

Impacts of fires in different seasons

Benefits	Disadvantages
<i>Fires lit in the early dry season</i>	
<p>Fires lit in the early dry season help prevent the spread of late dry season wildfires by removing ground layer fuel. Burnt strips of ground can form a network of control lines along with other barriers, such as roads, tracks and rivers. When lit late in the afternoon, early dry season fires are likely to go out overnight, so are easy to control.</p>	<p>These fires can cause vegetation thickening by removing grasses that compete with woody regrowth. Woody plants draw on soil moisture through the dry season, so will already be above the grasses that resprout with the first rains. These fires can also damage actively growing perennial grasses and cause their replacement by annual grasses.</p>
<i>Fires lit in the mid-dry season</i>	
<p>Fires lit in the mid-dry season may be useful to help extend fire breaks if there is already a network of early burn established.</p>	<p>These fires may get out of control and burn for several weeks. Fires lit in the mid-dry season can contribute to vegetation thickening</p>
<i>Fires lit in the late dry season</i>	
<p>Fires lit in the late dry season can maintain and restore open vegetation structure. They can help to create nesting hollows in the tops of trees that are needed by hollow-nesting birds and mammals.</p>	<p>These fires are extremely difficult to control, and can burn extensive areas of pasture and eliminate native animals by destroying large areas of habitat. They also expose soil to erosion, may destroy canopy trees, and can endanger human life and property.</p>
<i>Storm-burns (lit after the first wet season downpour)</i>	
<p>When used skilfully, storm-burns help restore open vegetation communities without causing extensive damage to forage, habitats or canopy. Storm-burns are most effective when lit 2-3 days after the first heavy storm, when the sap has risen in woody plants, but before most grass seed has germinated.</p>	<p>Timing of storm-burns can be difficult, and impossible in years when the first rains are widespread and persistent. Storm-burns can spread uncontrollably if lit when rain has been insufficient or patchy. If lit too long after the first rains, they can cause loss of ground cover and soil erosion.</p>



Storm-burns rarely reach the canopy, but clean up the suckers © Stephen Garnett