Australian Government | National Landcare Program

fba

FACT SHEET

Semi-Evergreen Vine Thicket

Semi-Evergreen Vine Thicket (SEVT) is a type of rainforest. SEVT refers to an entire plant community – that is, all the different plant species that live together in one ecosystem. Typically, SEVT has a mix of evergreen, semi-evergreen and deciduous trees mixed with vines, shrubs, herbs and scrambling plants. SEVT almost never has grass in the understorey. In fact, if you see more than a tiny amount of grass in the understorey, this usually means that something is wrong.

Evergreen plants keep all of their leaves all year round.

Deciduous plants lose all of their leaves for part of the year.

Semi-evergreen plants lose some of their leaves for part of the year.

In central Queensland, deciduous and semi-evergreen species lose their leaves over the dry season not winter.

Why is SEVT endangered?

At the start of the 20th century, SEVT may have covered about 20 million hectares in Queensland and New New South Wales. Burning and clearing for agriculture have removed these communities, significantly reducing the size of remaining SEVT patches.

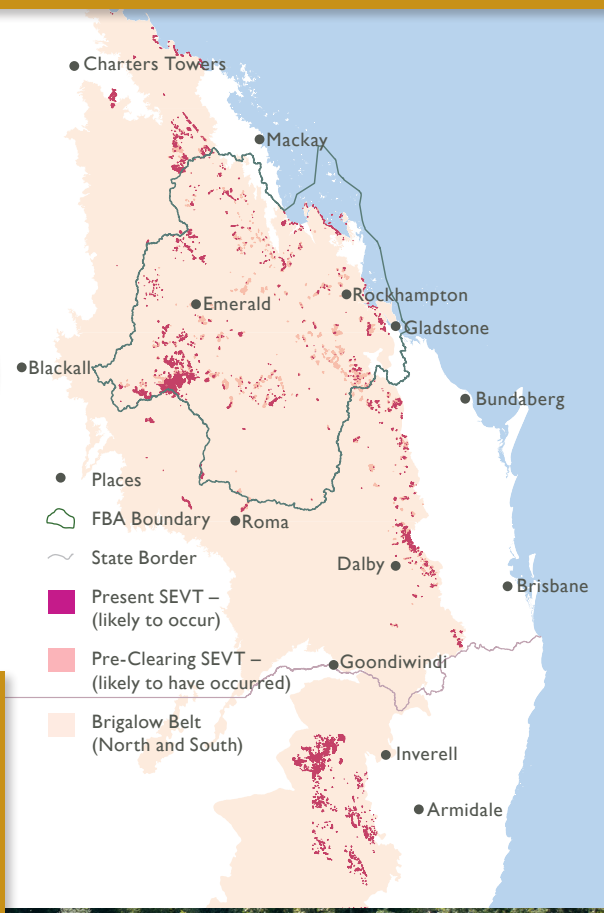
Where is SEVT found?

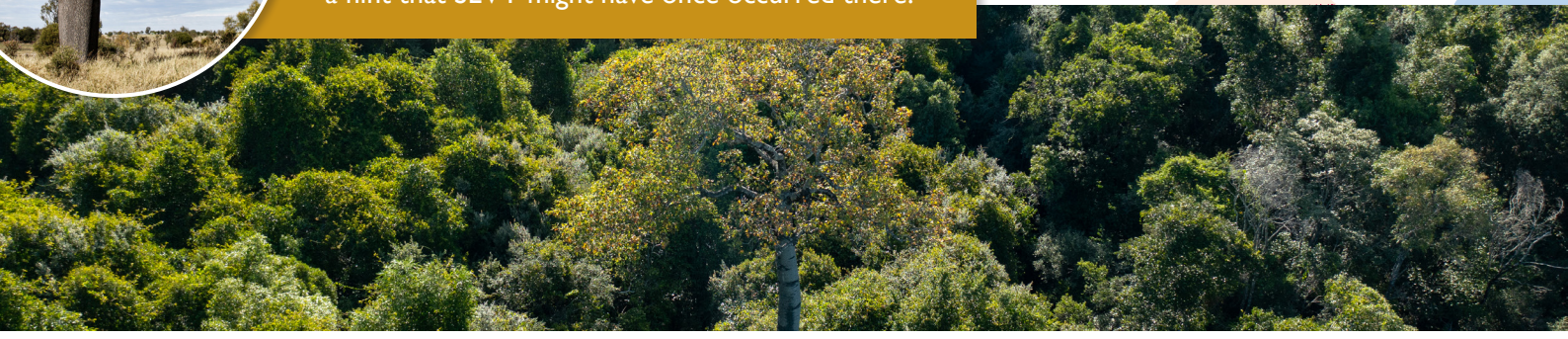
Most SEVT has been cleared for farming, the majority that's left is along ridgelines and mountain tops and other places that aren't very good for farming.

SEVT often stands out as a bright green or dark green against surrounding woodland (at least after rain).

Bottle trees are a good indication of where SEVT was before clearing.

Bottle trees are often found towering above the canopy of intact SEVT. Many land managers found them so striking that they left these trees behind when they cleared the land for agriculture. If you see tall, fat bottle trees standing out in a pasture, this is a hint that SEVT might have once occurred there.





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Benefits of SEVT

DROUGHT RESISTANCE

Most SEVT species are more drought resistant than those found in grassy eucalypt woodlands. The species have adapted to survive periods of drought stress. Even on the rare occasions when they appear to be killed by fire or severe drought, many SEVT species have roots that can survive and re-sprout when the soil regains moisture.

NATURAL FIRE BREAK

Healthy SEVT suppresses wildfire and functions as a natural firebreak in the landscape by creating a gap in flammable vegetation. This can be invaluable for managing fire. Some researchers have even proposed planting dense stands of SEVT species to protect infrastructure from fires during dangerous fire seasons.

FERTILE SOIL AND EROSION CONTROL

SEVT is also known to improve soil fertility and protect soil from erosion. The leaves that fall from SEVT species break down easier than other ecosystems. Nutrients in these leaves returns to the soil faster.

CARBON STORAGE

SEVT can store a lot of carbon, both above the ground and below the ground. In fact, it is one of the most carbon-dense ecosystems in central Queensland.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Many of the plants in SEVT have a variety of chemicals in their leaves. These are called 'phytochemicals' and they provide a vast, untapped reservoir of potential new pharmaceuticals that can help humans!

HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS

SEVT provides food and habitat for many animals, including many that do not usually live in SEVT, creating healthy biodiversity. In fact, SEVT provides an important source of food, moisture and shelter for many species during droughts.

Biodiversity =

The sum of all the different species and types of species found in an ecosystem. The more biodiverse an ecosystem is the healthier it is.

Fitzroy Basin Association (FBA) is working alongside land managers to protect, manage and restore remaining SEVT populations throughout the Fitzroy region. Some of this work involves…

- ✓ Weed control
- ✓ Investigating effective methods of feral animal control
- ✓ Implementing fire management plans
- ✓ Engaging land managers in discussions around SEVT and its benefits