

Forest responses to drought: from tissues to biosphere

Maurizio Mencuccini



Extreme events

Tipping points

Cascading feedbacks → mega-catastrophes



Top list you do not want to be on



2017's three monster hurricanes — Harvey, Irma and Maria — among five costliest ever

Doyle Rice | USA TODAY
Published 11:17 AM EST Feb 1, 2018



- Harvey - \$100 billion
- Maria - \$90 billion Irma - \$50 billion
- Golden medal (Katrina, 160 billion)

Insurance industry

Here's why Warren Buffett says Berkshire could handle \$400 billion 'mega-catastrophe'

Published: Feb 24, 2018 3:01 p.m. ET



Aa

Annual probability of 'mega-cat' seen at around 2%



- Berkshire's pre-tax underwriting loss at \$3.2 billion
- Forestry industry

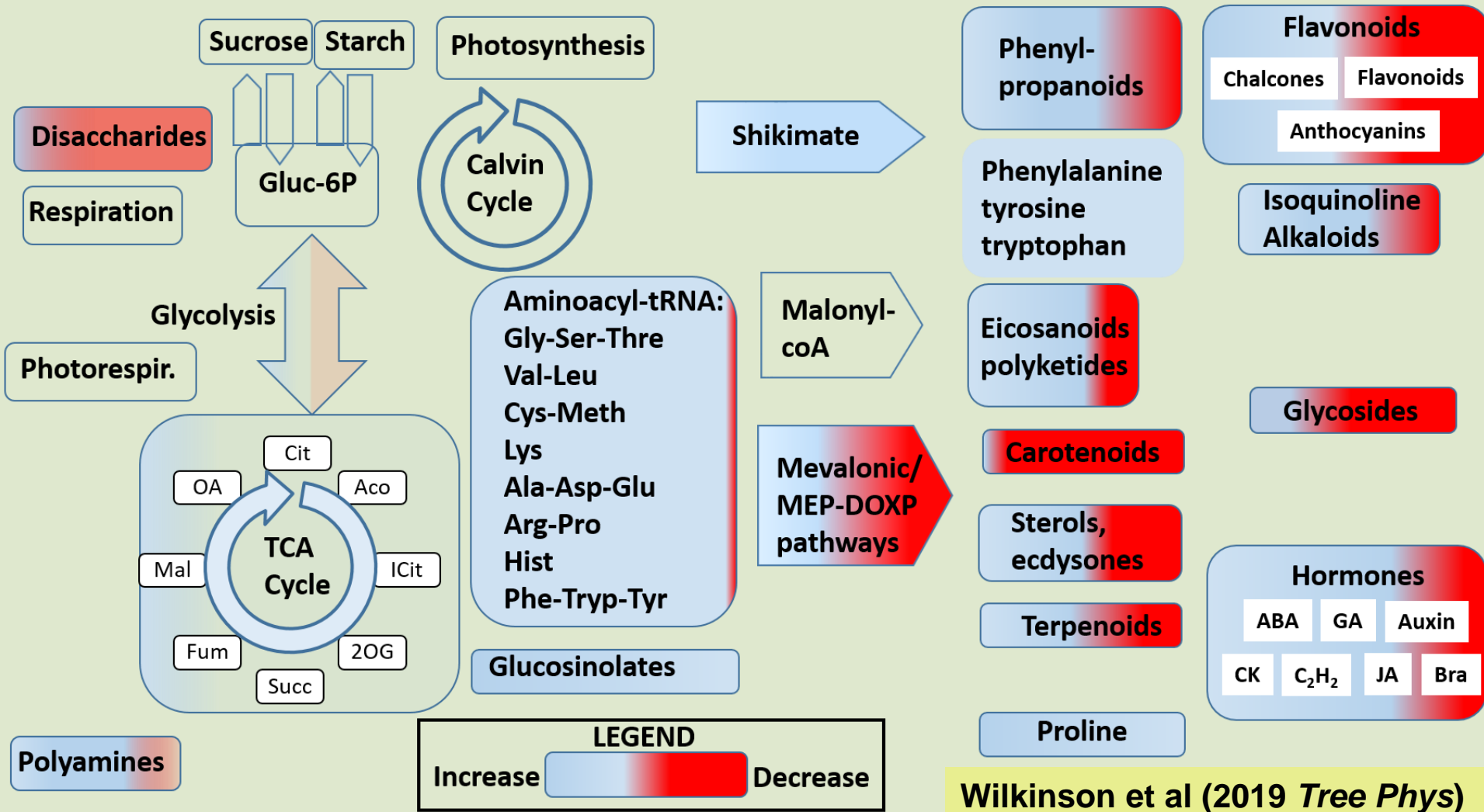
Intro

- Significance of trait-based ecology (terrestrial water fluxes)
- Which traits describe plant water use and response to drought (i.e., understanding)
- Can they help us to infer large-scale processes (climate change, anthropic disturbances, etc.) (i.e., predictions)

Toolbox:-omic worlds

Primary metabolism

Secondary metabolism



Toolbox: databases

TRY

Plant Trait Database

Quantifying and scaling global plant trait diversity

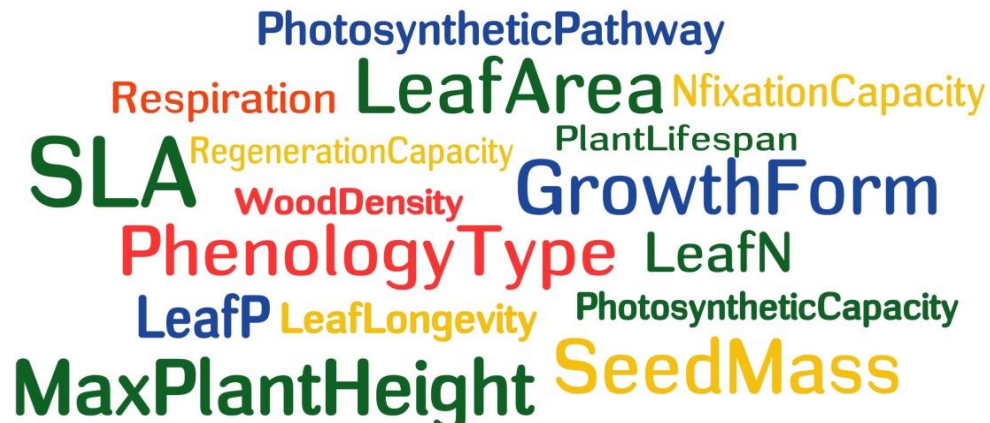
TRY is a network of vegetation scientists headed by [DIVERSITAS](#), [IGBP](#), the [Max Planck Institute for Biogeochemistry](#) and an international [Advisory Board](#).

Main objectives

- Provide a global archive of plant traits
- Promote trait-based approaches in ecology and biodiversity science
- Support the design of a new generation of global vegetation models

Current state (04/19)

- 11.8 million trait records for ~ 300,000 plant species
 - >6,000 requests of data

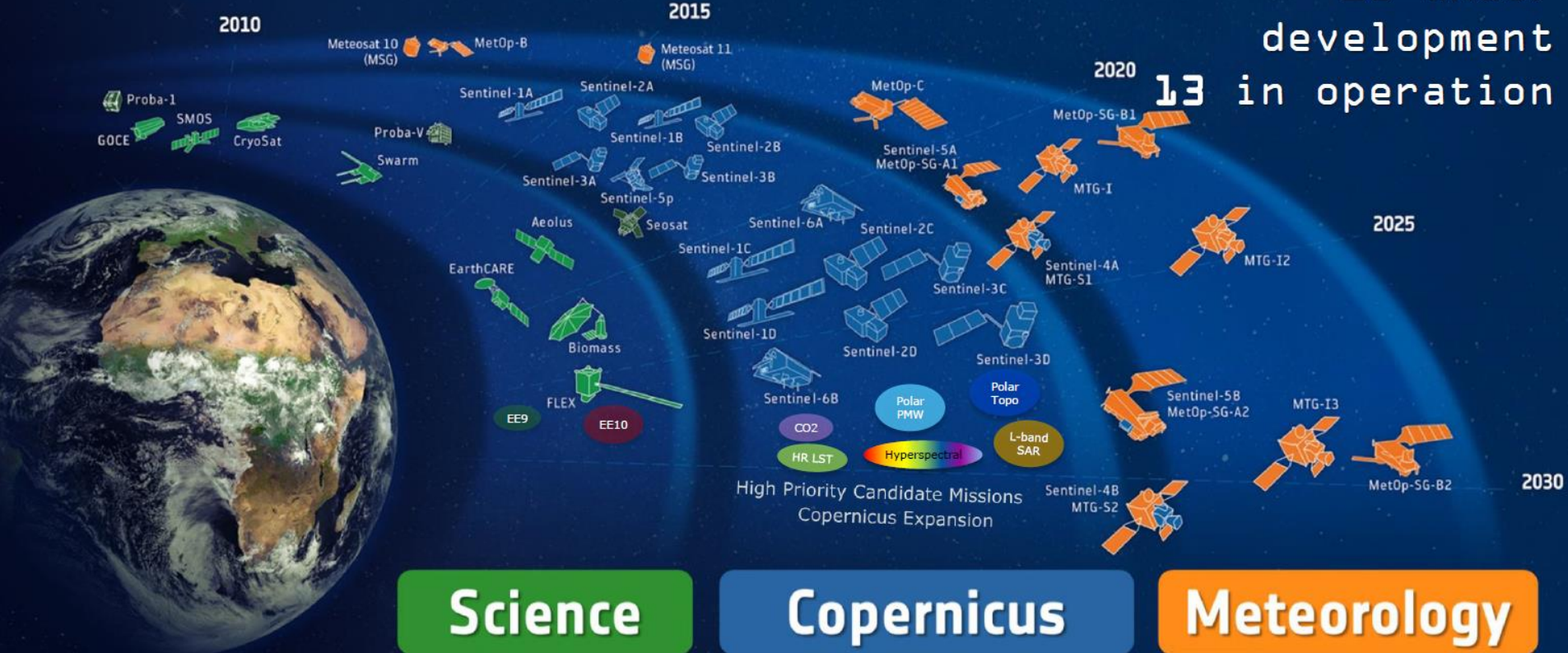


Toolbox: Remote sensing

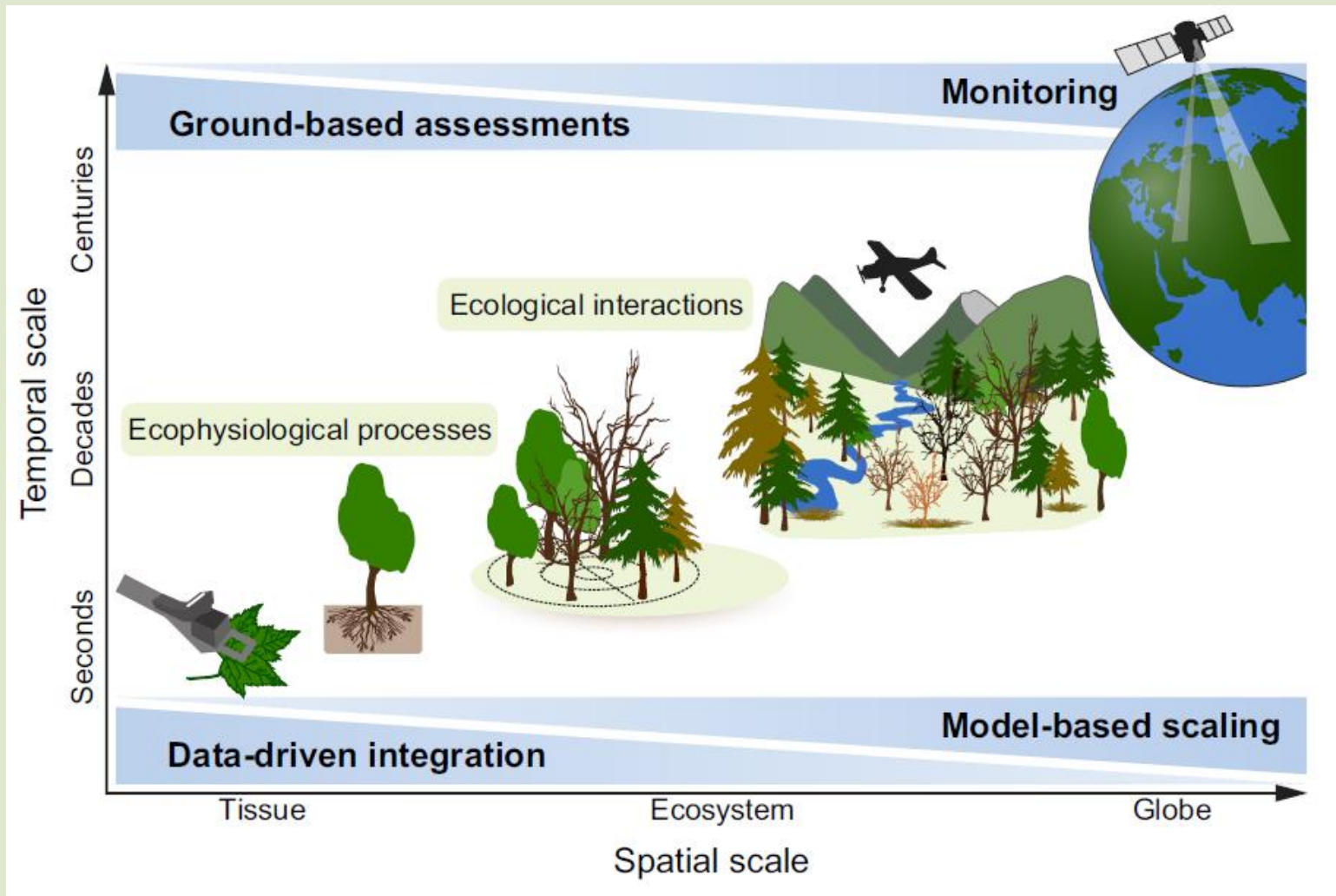
ESA-DEVELOPED EARTH OBSERVATION MISSIONS



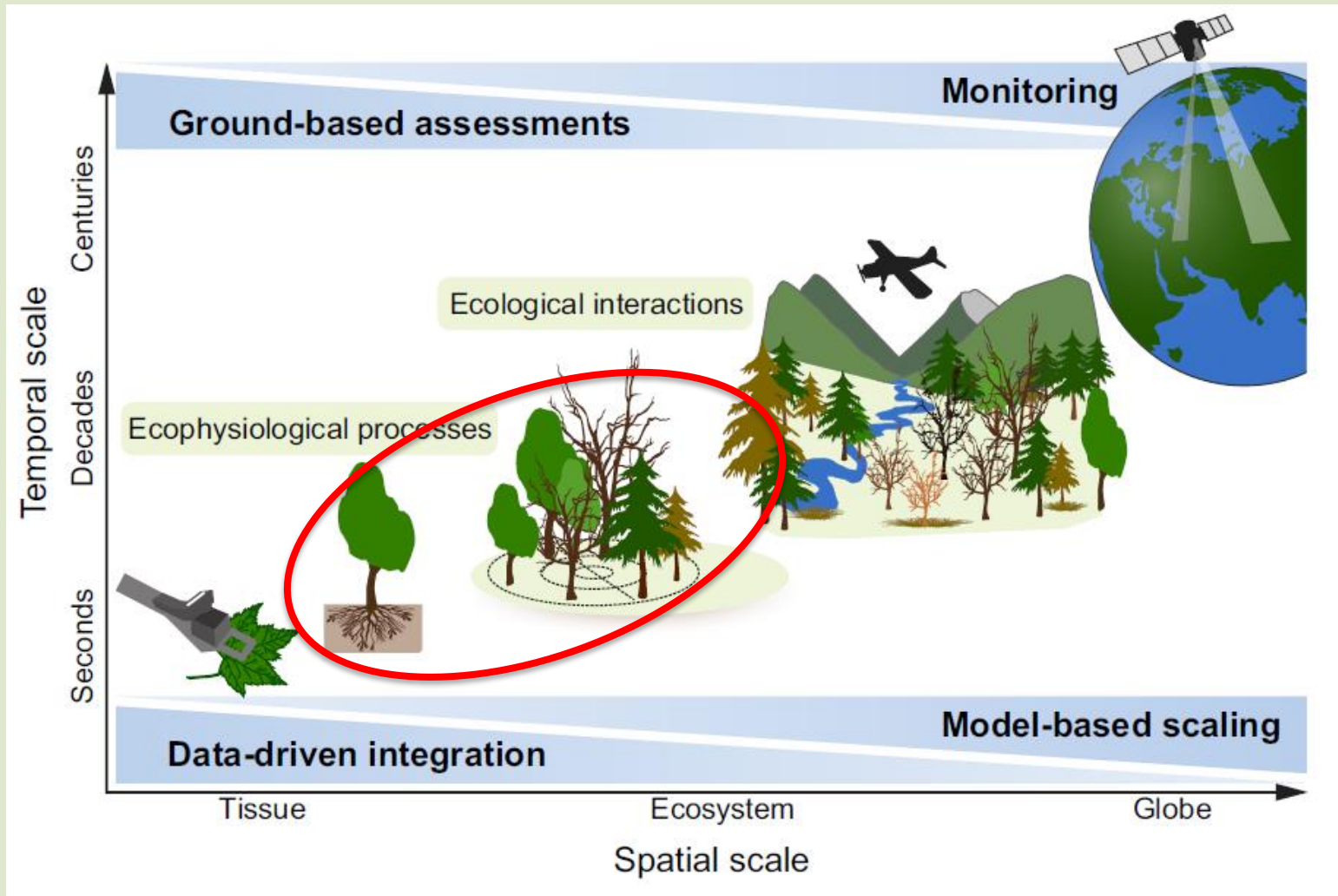
Satellites
28 under
development
13 in operation



Toolbox: modelling of climate-vegetation feedbacks



Toolbox: modelling of climate-vegetation feedbacks



Large uncertainty from land surface modelling

Evaluation of the terrestrial carbon cycle, future plant geography and climate-carbon cycle feedbacks using five Dynamic Global Vegetation Models (DGVMs)

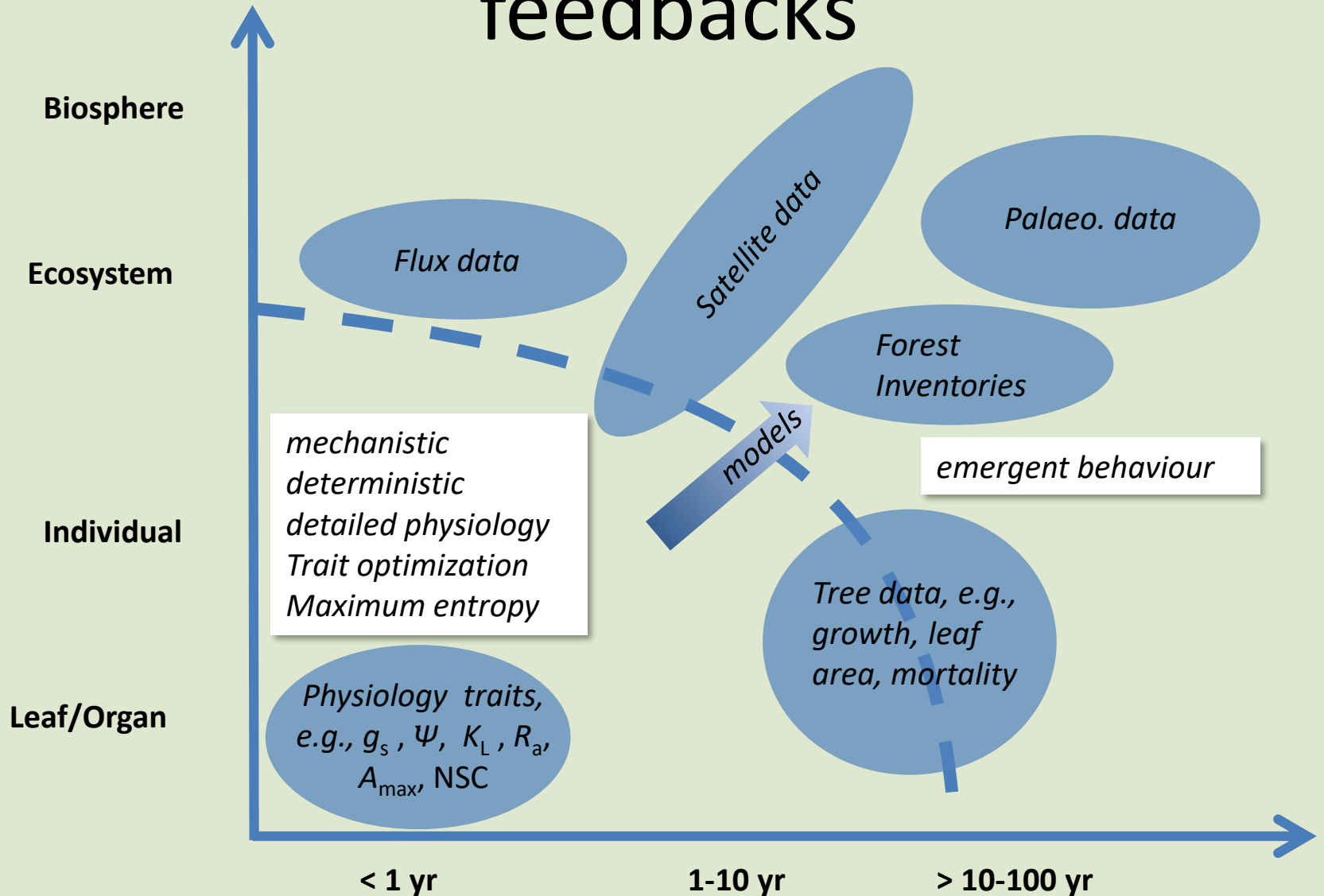
S. SITCH*, C. HUNTINGFORD†, N. GEDNEY*, P. E. LEVY‡, M. LOMAS§, S. L. PIAO¶, R. BETTS||, P. CIAIS¶, P. COX**, P. FRIEDLINGSTEIN¶, C. D. JONES||, I. C. PRENTICE†† and F. I. WOODWARD§

**Met Office Hadley Centre, JCHMR, Maclean Building, Wallingford OX10 8BB, UK, †Centre for Ecology and Hydrology Wallingford, Maclean Building, Wallingford OX10 8BB, UK, ‡Centre for Ecology and Hydrology Bush Estate, Penicuik, Midlothian EH26 0QB, UK, §Department of Animal & Plant Sciences, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2TN, UK, ¶IPSL/LSCE, Unite mixte 1572 CEA-CNRS, CE-Saclay, Bat 701, 91191 Gif sur Yvette, France, ||Met Office Hadley Centre, Fitzroy Road, Exeter EX1 3PB, UK, **School of Engineering, Computer Science and Mathematics, University of Exeter, Exeter ES4 4QF, UK, ††QUEST, Department of Earth Sciences, University of Bristol, Wills Memorial Building, Queens Road, Bristol BS8 1RJ, UK*

Abstract

This study tests the ability of five Dynamic Global Vegetation Models (DGVMs), forced with observed climatology and atmospheric CO₂, to model the contemporary global carbon cycle. The DGVMs are also coupled to a fast 'climate analogue model', based on the Hadley Centre General Circulation Model (GCM), and run into the future for four Special Report Emission Scenarios (SRES): A1FI, A2, B1, B2. Results show that all DGVMs are consistent with the contemporary global land carbon budget. Under the more extreme projections of future environmental change, the responses of the DGVMs diverge markedly. In particular, large uncertainties are associated with the response of tropical vegetation to drought and boreal ecosystems to elevated temperatures and changing soil moisture status. The DGVMs show more divergence in their response to

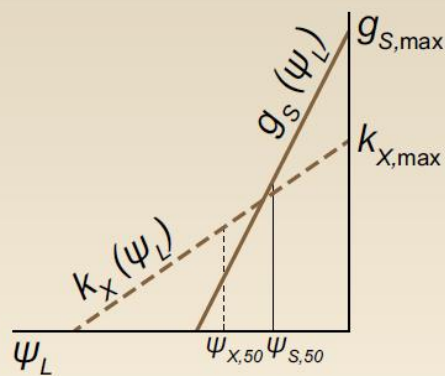
Predictions of climate-vegetation feedbacks



How does a trait-based model work

trait = any morphological, physiological, phenological feature that impacts fitness

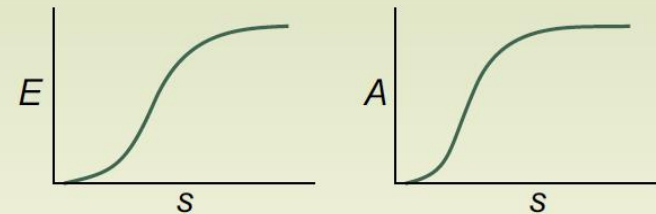
(a) Tissue-level properties and whole plant fluxes



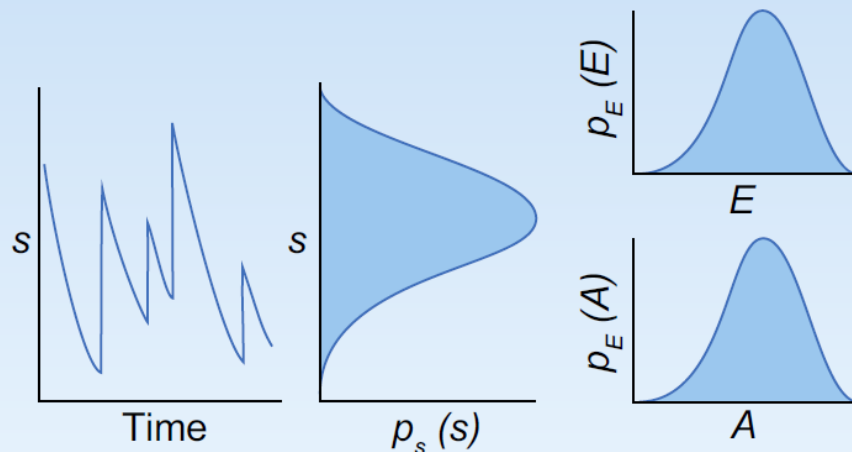
Water supply from the soil = transpiration (E)
→ Relation between E and soil moisture
→ Scale up fluxes to stand-level using LAI and SAI

(b) Stand transpiration and net primary productivity

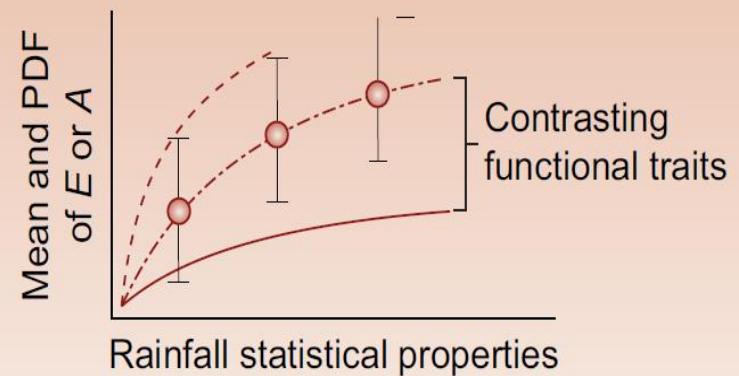
Tissue-level properties are used to obtain stand-level relations between soil moisture (s) and transpiration (E) or assimilation (A)



(c) Probability density functions



(d) Transpiration and productivity along climatic gradients



If the problem is drought, which ones are THE traits?

Physiological traits (leaf)

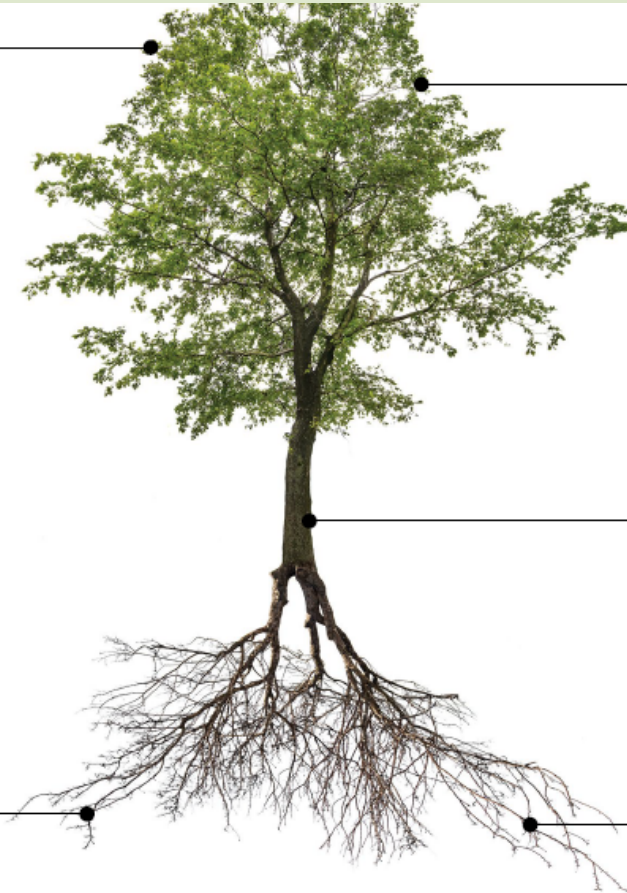
- Stomatal regulation
- Turgor loss point
- Cuticular conductance

Physiological traits (common)

- Vulnerability to cavitation (Ψ_{12} , Ψ_{50} , Ψ_{80})
- Maximum hydraulic conductance
- Capacitance and water storage
- Cell membrane permeability (aquaporin regulation)

Physiological traits (root)

- Cortical lacunae formation
- Root shrinkage/hydraulic isolation
- Soil-root hydraulic conductance



Morphological traits (shoot)

- Stomatal anatomy
- Leaf vein density
- Total leaf area
- Leaf shedding/drought deciduous
- Leaf to sapwood area ratio

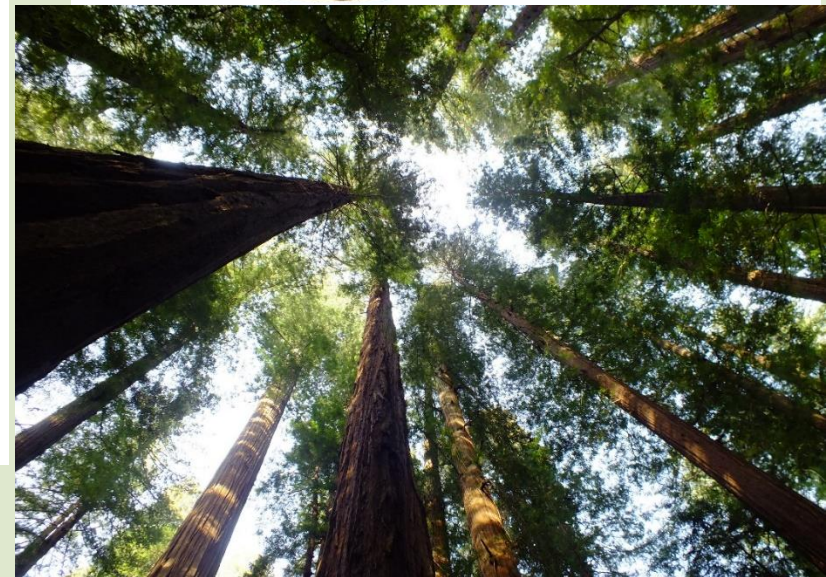
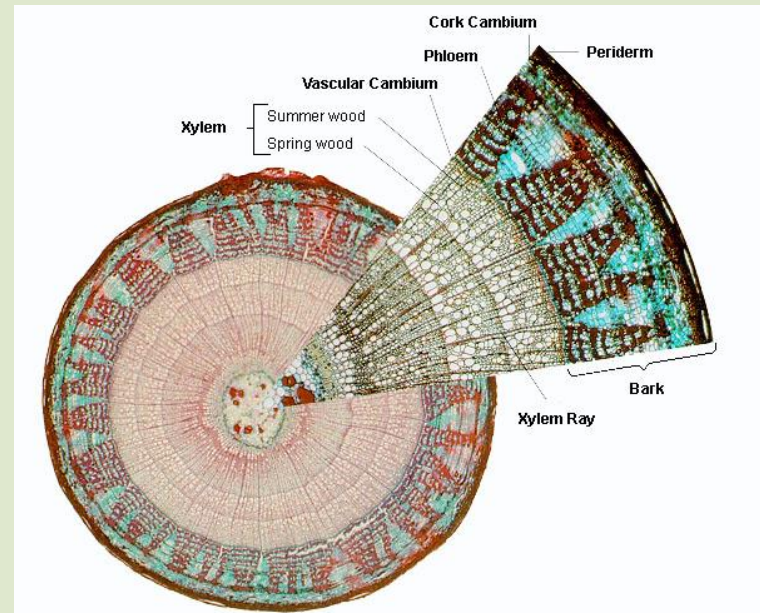
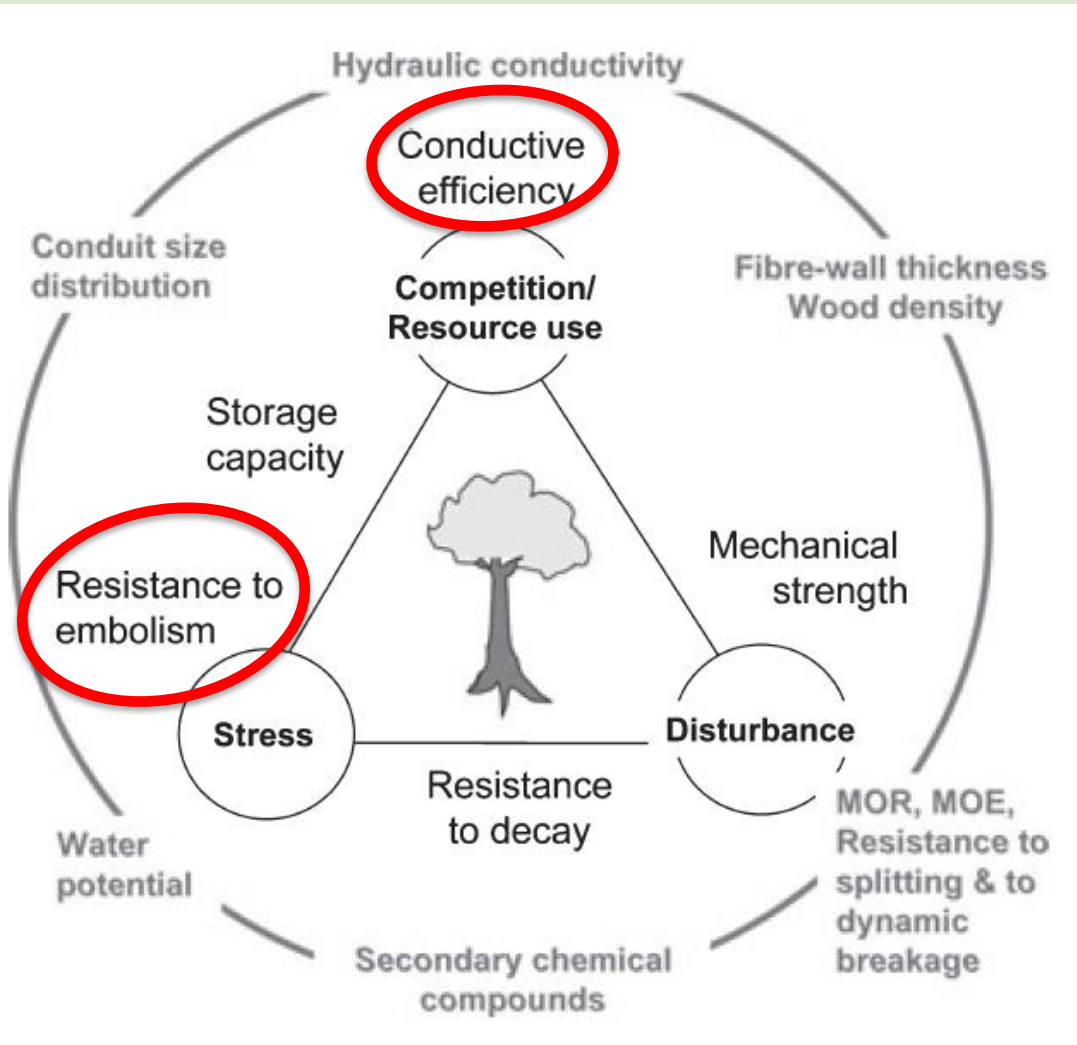
Xylem anatomical traits

- Xylem conduit size, number and connectivity
- Pit membrane thickness/porosity
- Wood density

Morphological traits (root)

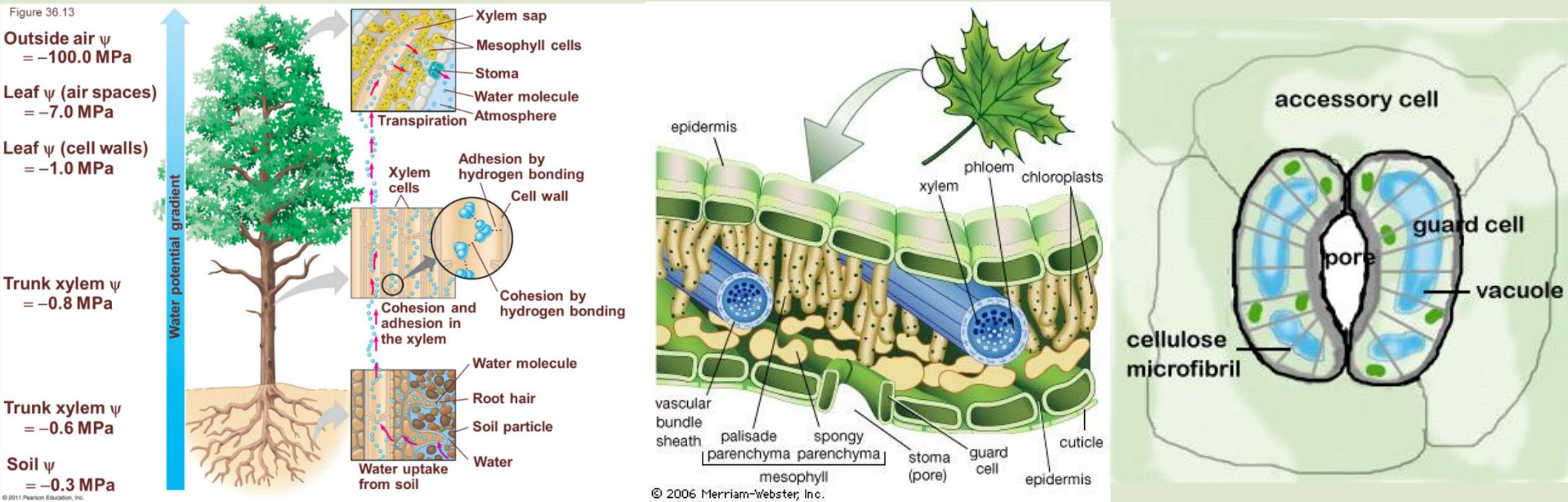
- Root to shoot ratio
- Rooting depth
- Fine root loss

Wood economics



Chave et al. (2009 *Ecol Lett*)

Leaf gas exchange

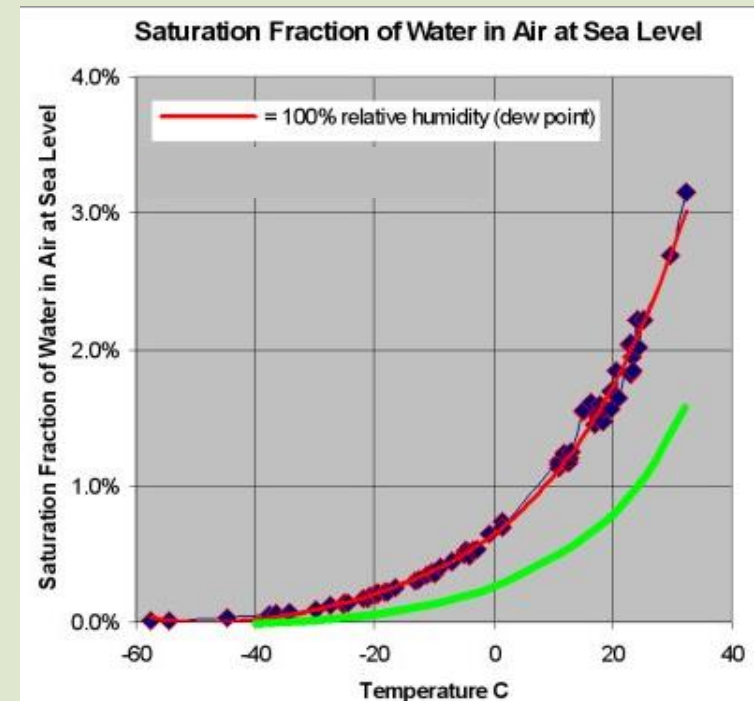
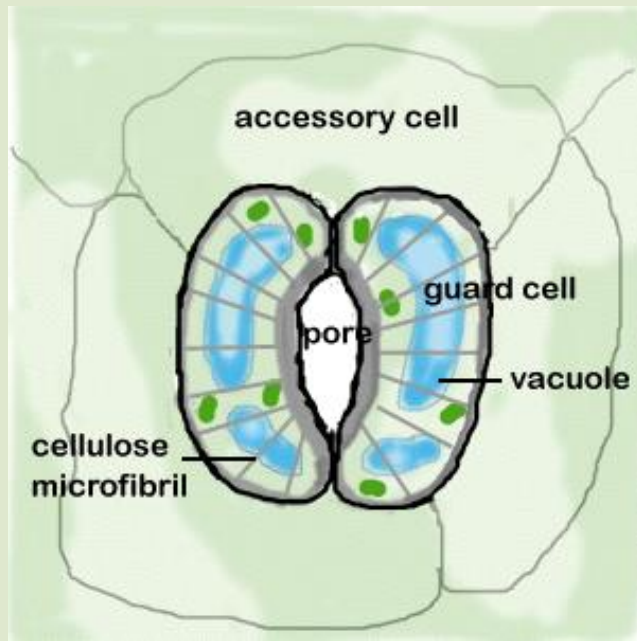


- Leaf stomata
- Inescapable trade-off between CO_2 uptake and water loss
- Predict stomatal behaviour based on this trade-off (Sperry et al (2017 *PCE*))

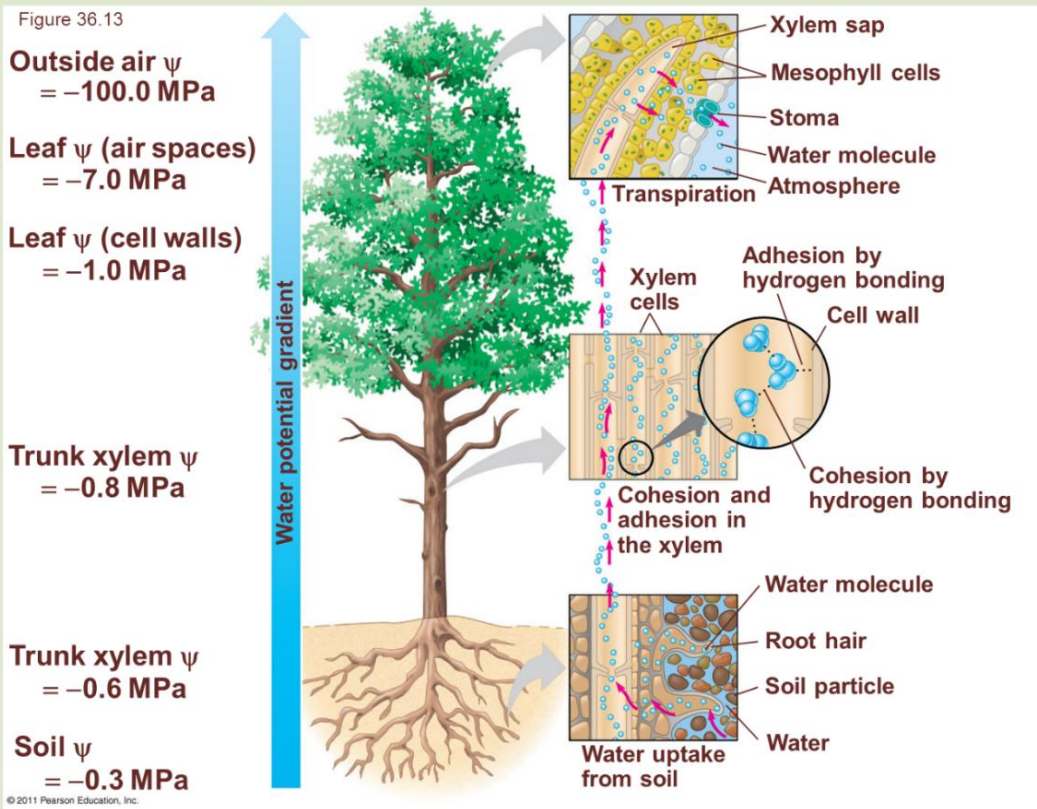
What is atmospheric moisture demand

Paradox of warming:

- More vapour in atmosphere (RH ~ constant)
- Deficit in vapour pressure (VPD) increases with T
- But plants perceive less water in atmosphere (in relative terms) → ATMOSPHERIC DROUGHT
- Increased plant water loss



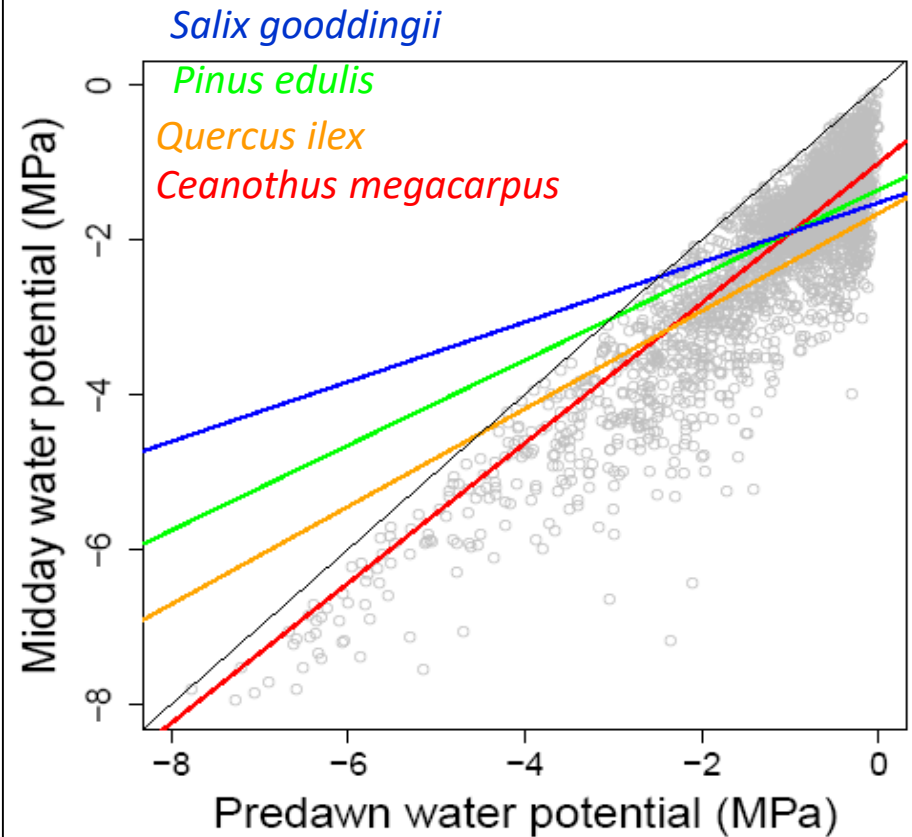
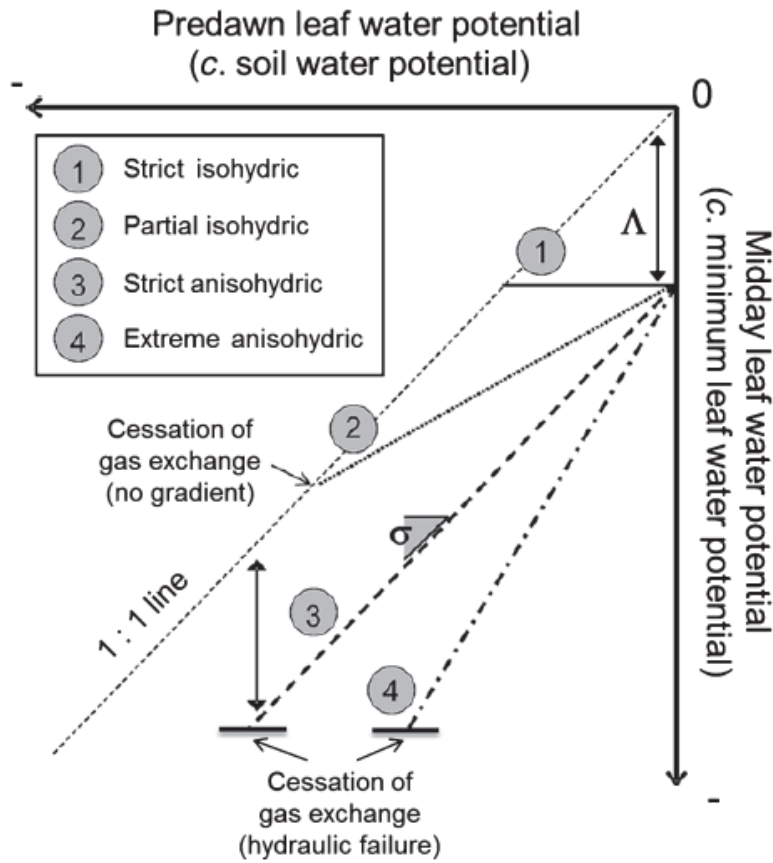
Key hydraulic traits and significance



1. Water status: water potential / content
2. Water transport: efficiency
3. Water transport: safety from embolism
4. Allocation ratio: Huber Value (1/leaf-sapwood area ratio)

1) Plant water status

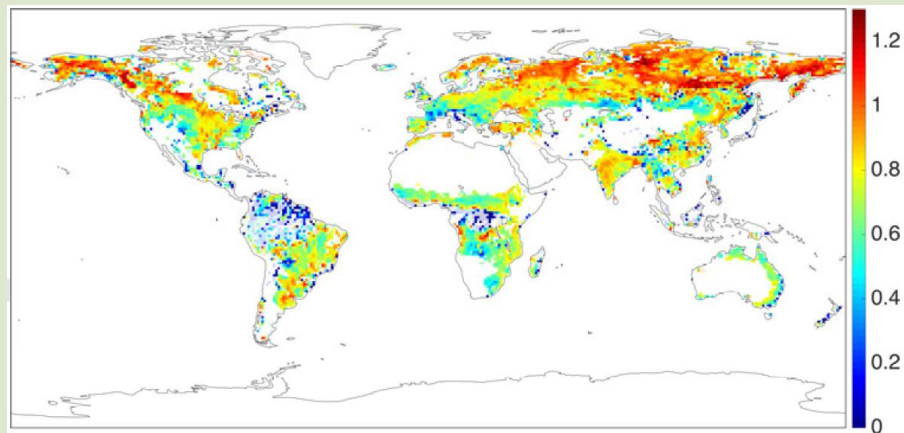
water potential / content



About 100 spp.

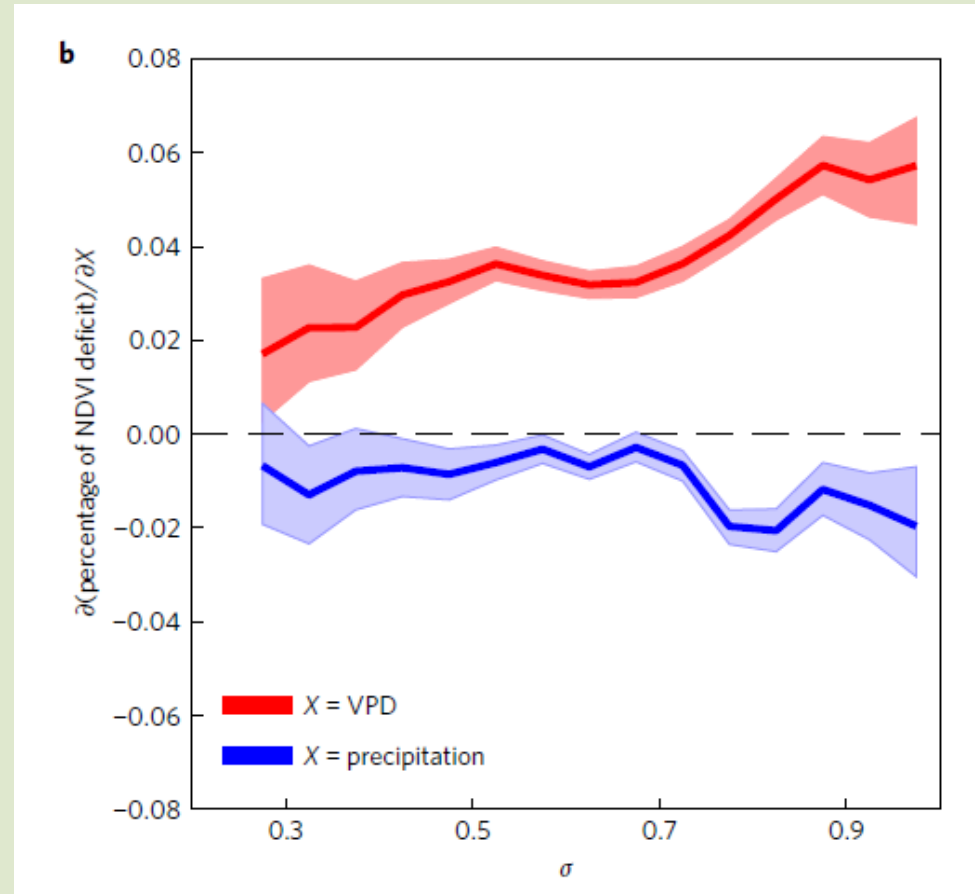
Martinez-Vilalta et al. (2015 *New Phy*)

1) Plant water status (Vegetation optical depth VOD)



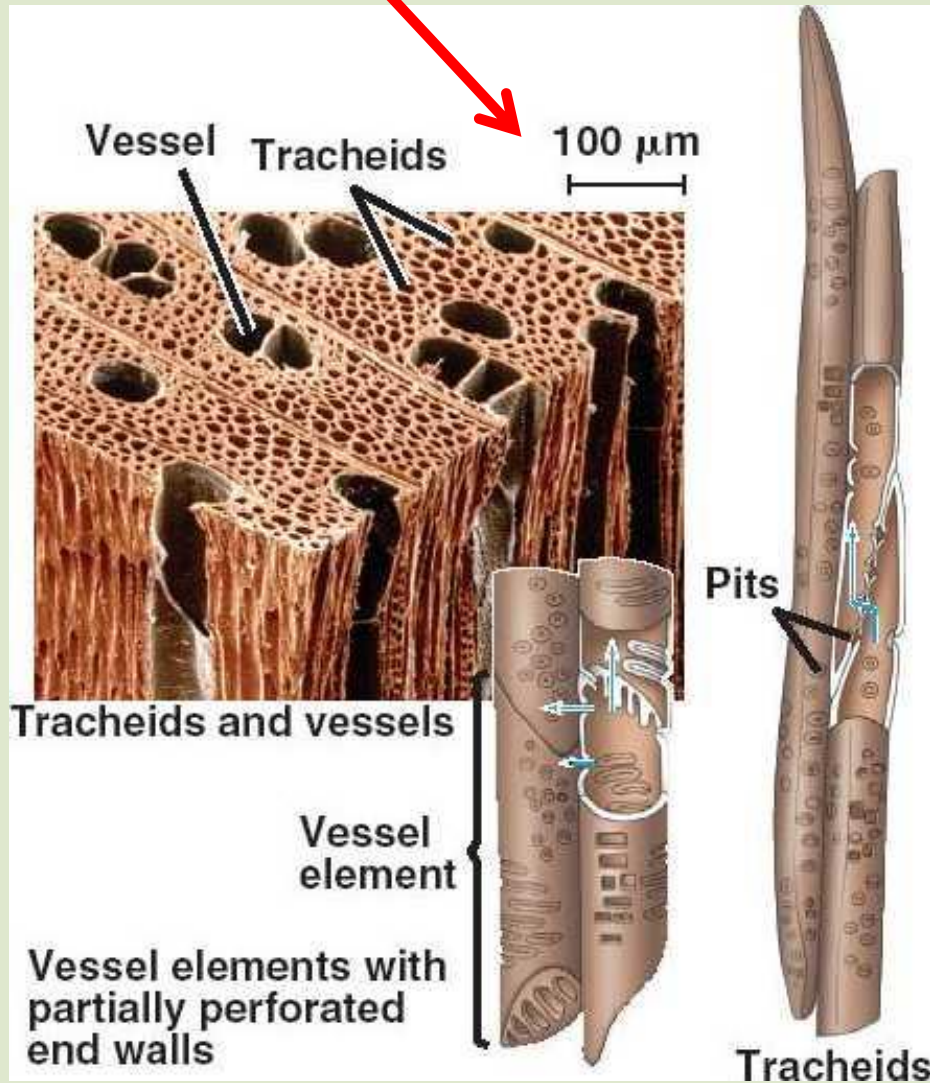
Diurnal variations in X-band of
passive microwave measurements
(Adv. Microw. Scann. Rad.-E or -2)

$$\text{VOD} \propto \text{RWC}_{\text{veg}}$$

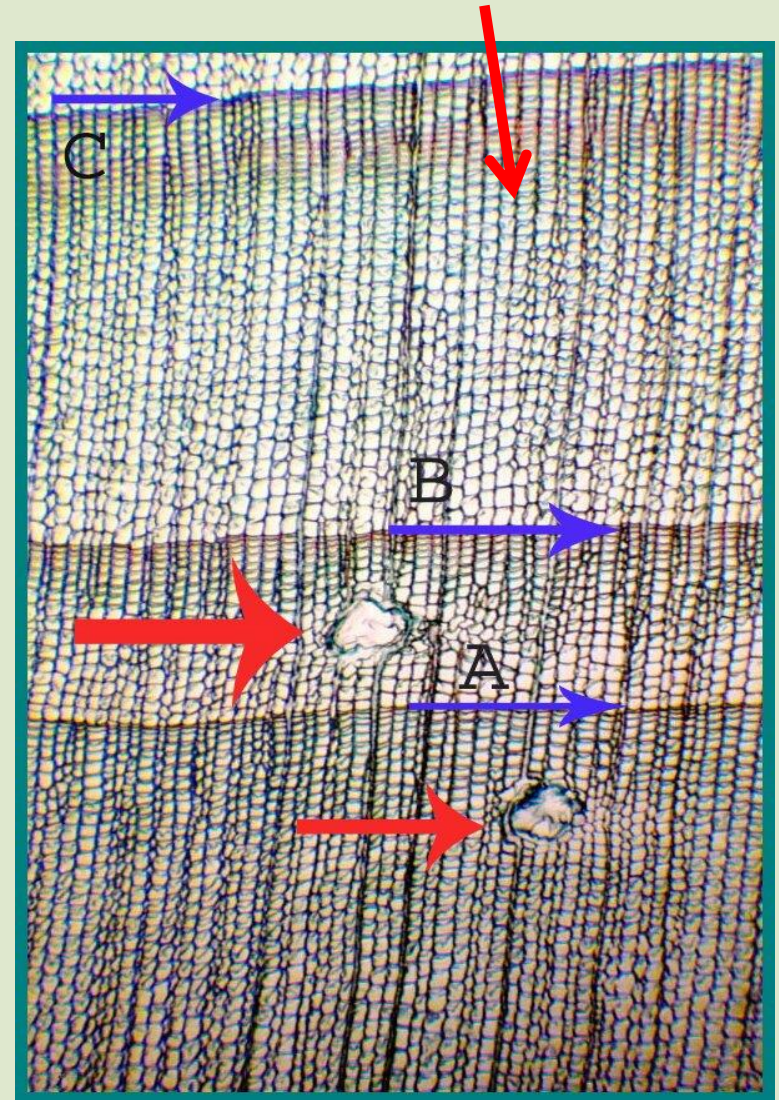


2) Efficient water transport

Angiosperms



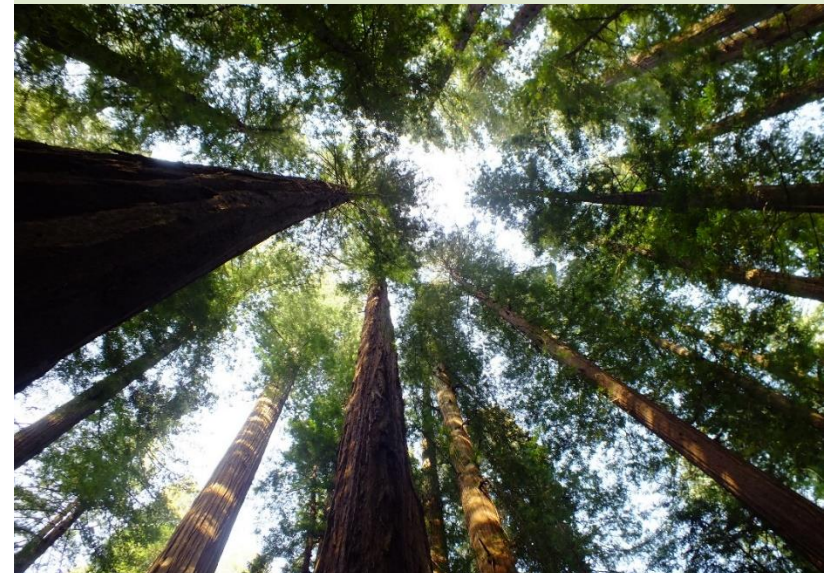
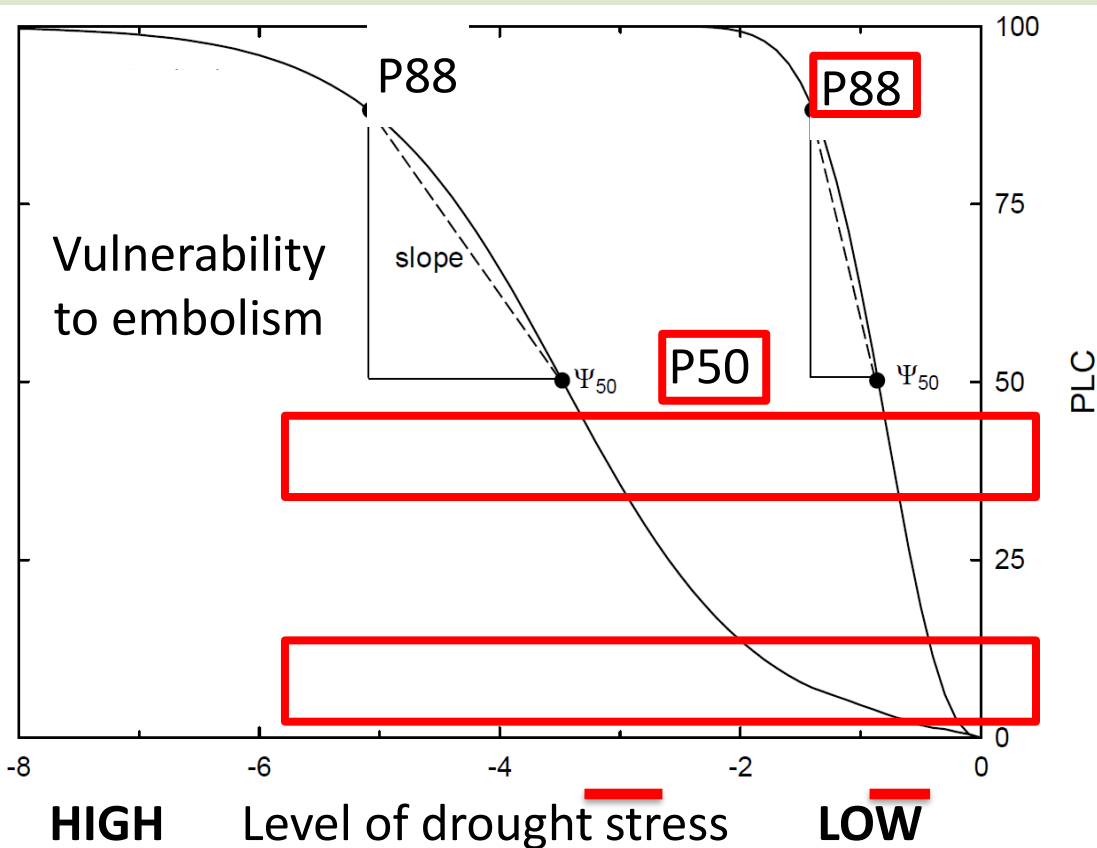
Gymnosperms



3) Safety from embolism

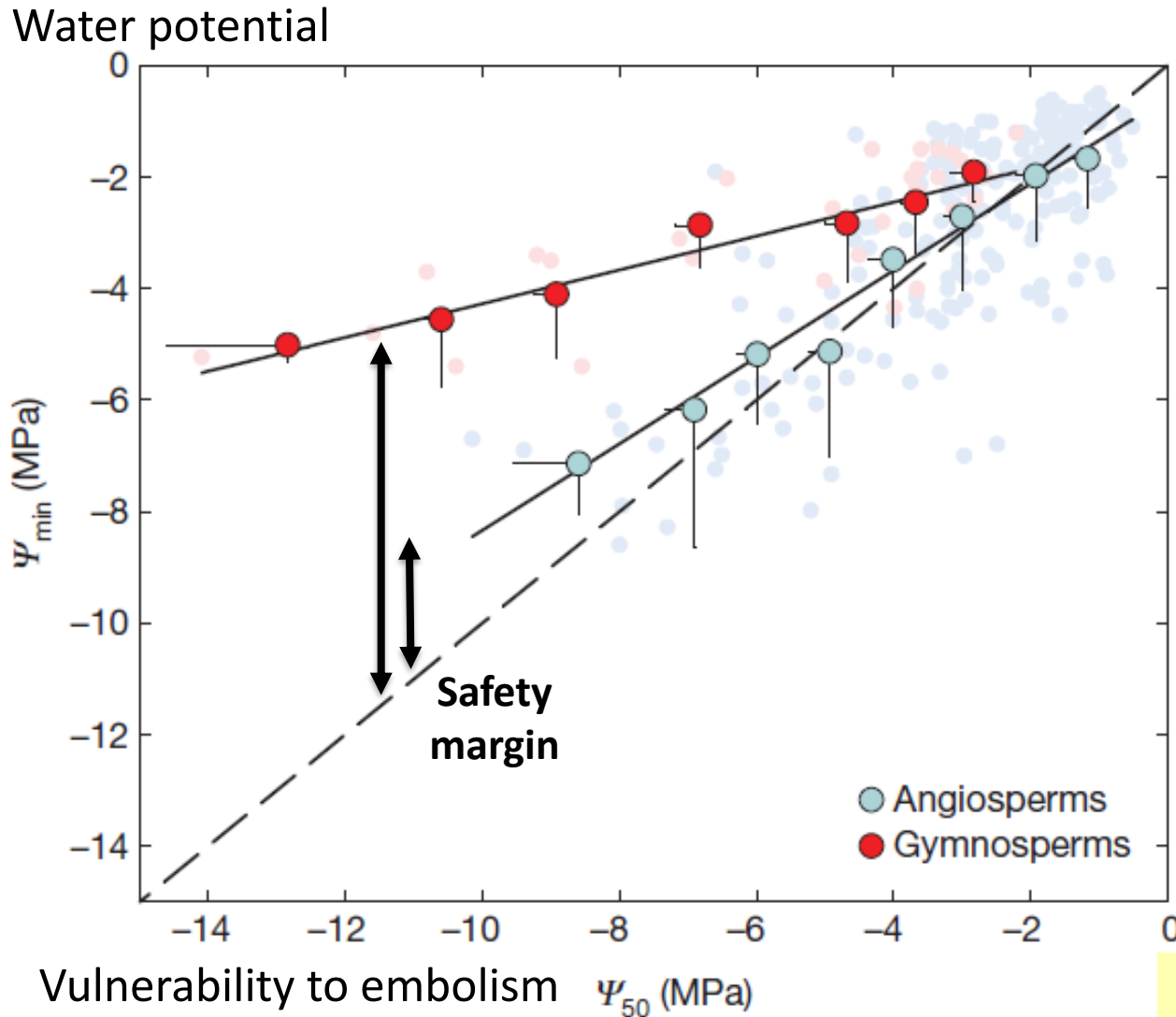
Vulnerability, exposure, risk

P50/88: Water potential @ 50% PLC
PLC = Percent loss conductivity



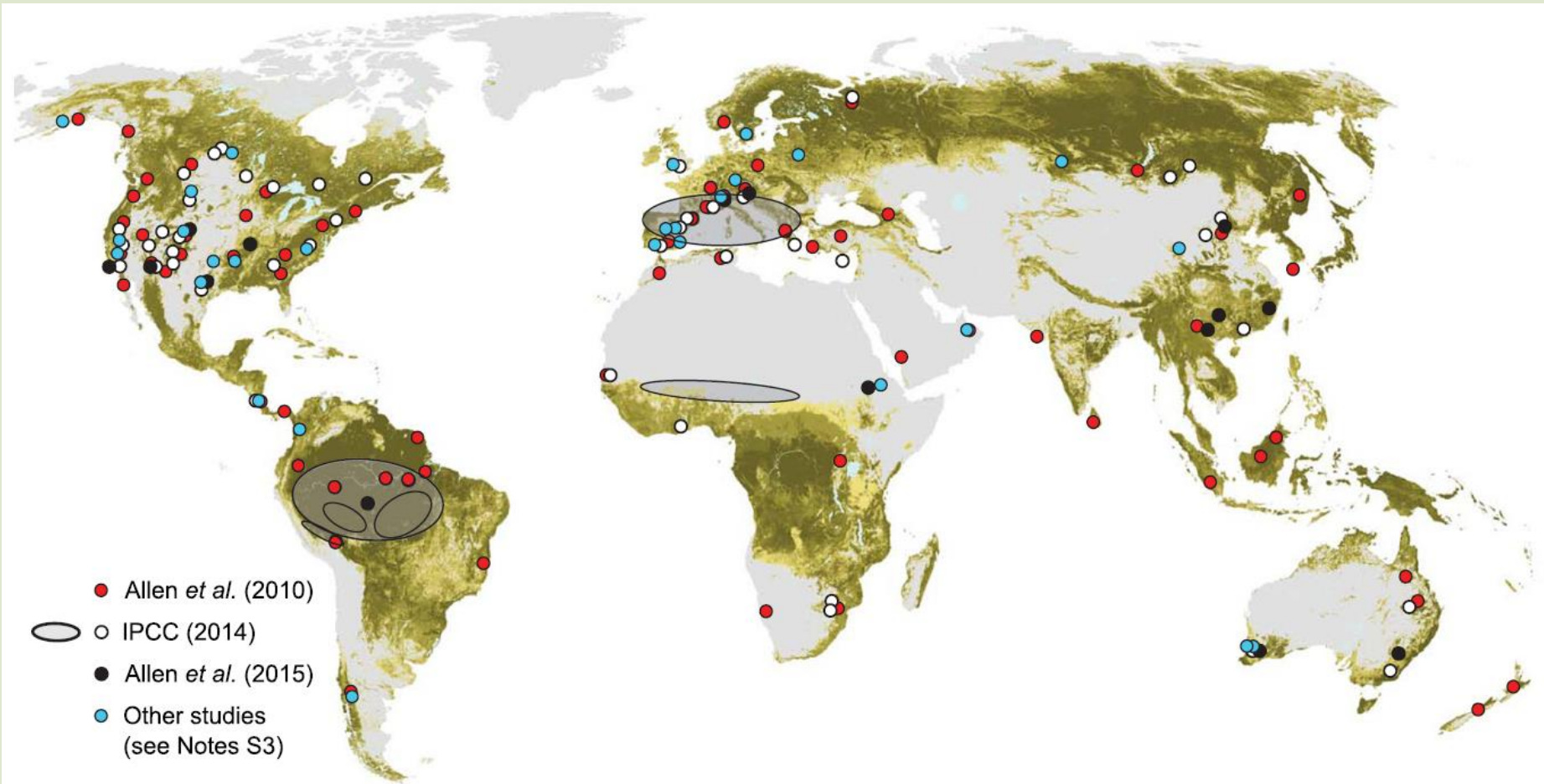
3) Safety from embolism

Vulnerability, exposure, risk

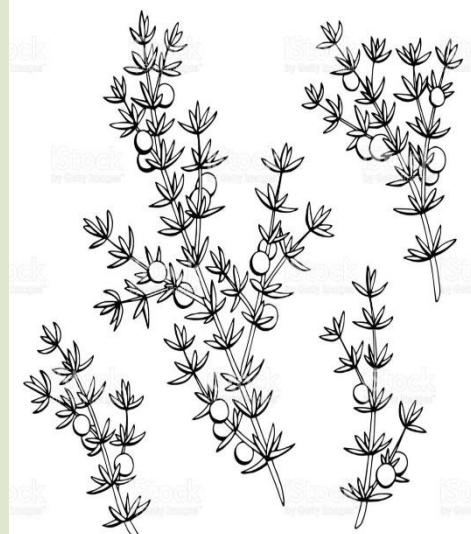
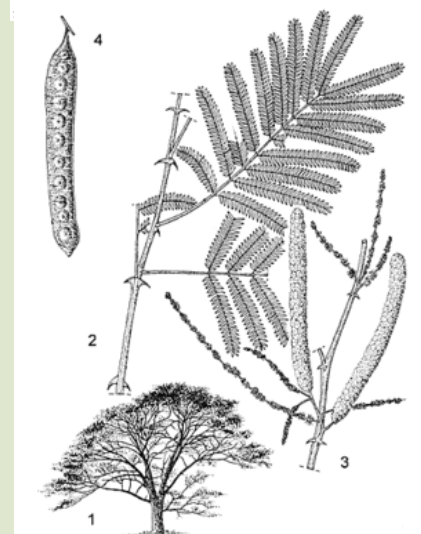
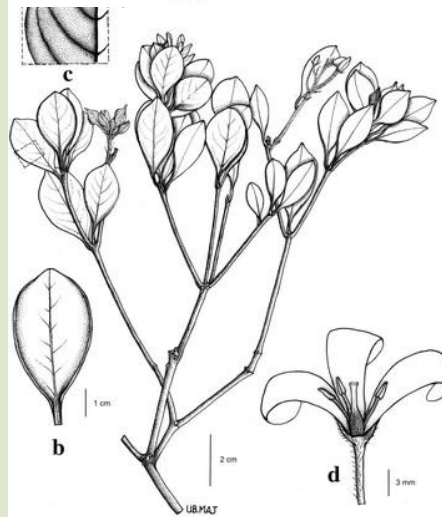
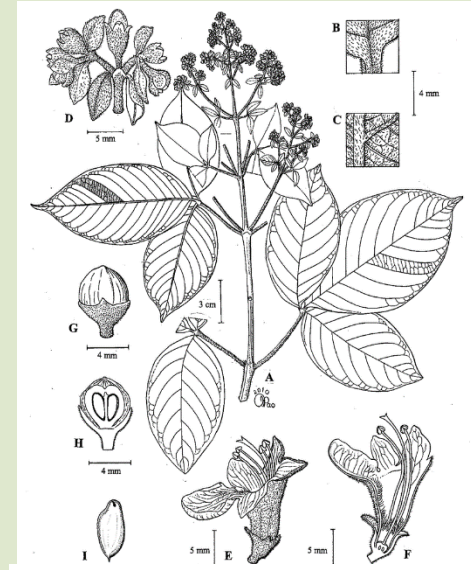
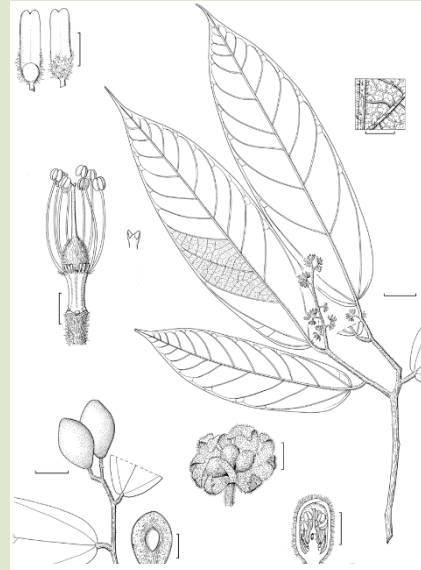
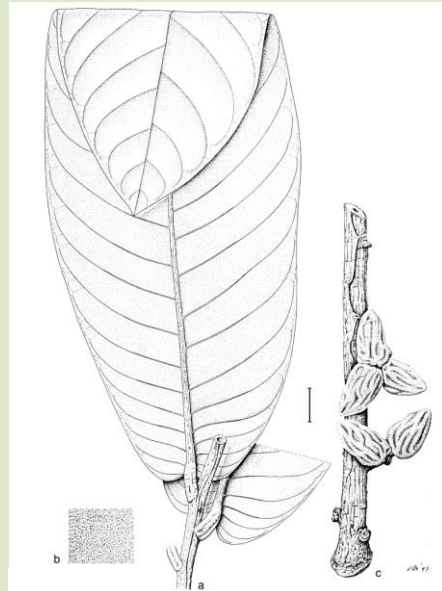
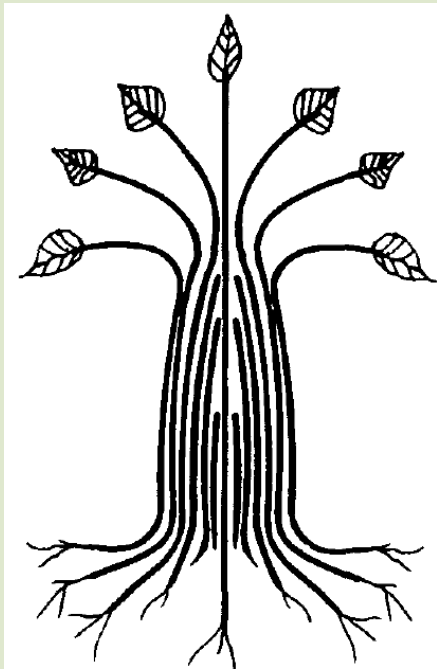


3) Safety under drought

Vulnerability, exposure, risk

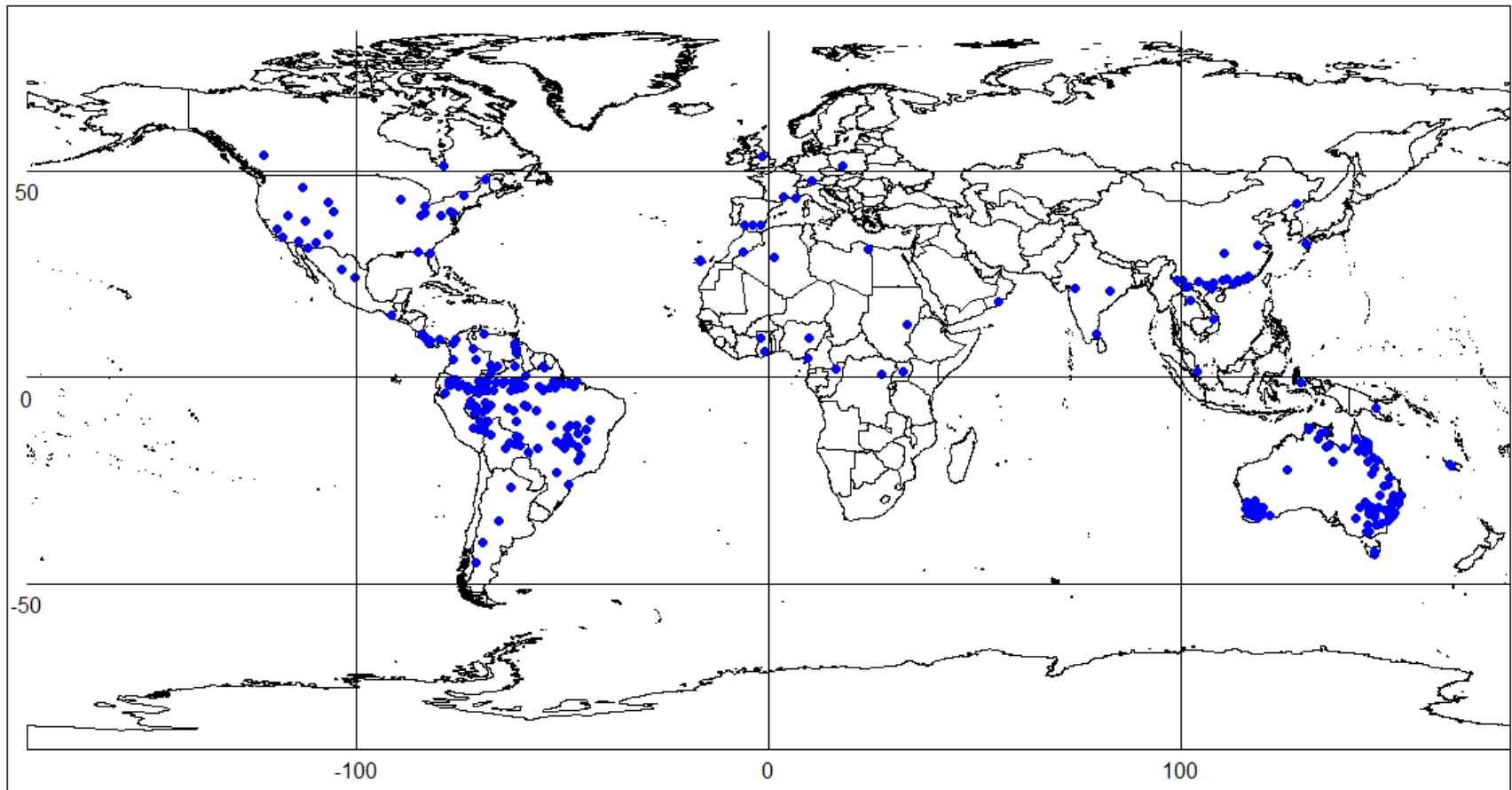


4) Partitioning (Huber value)



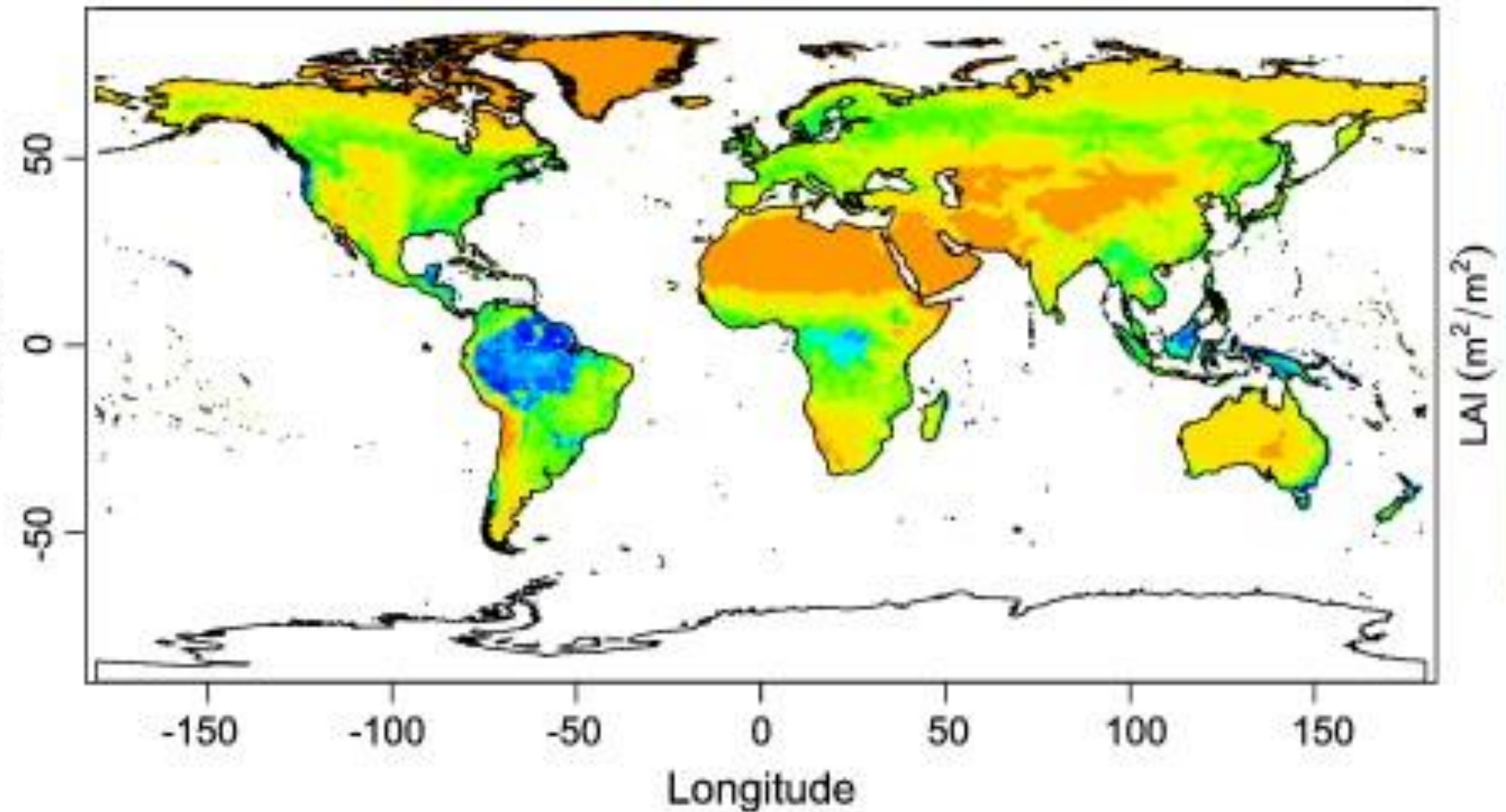
Collating empirical evidence

N = 1,500 points



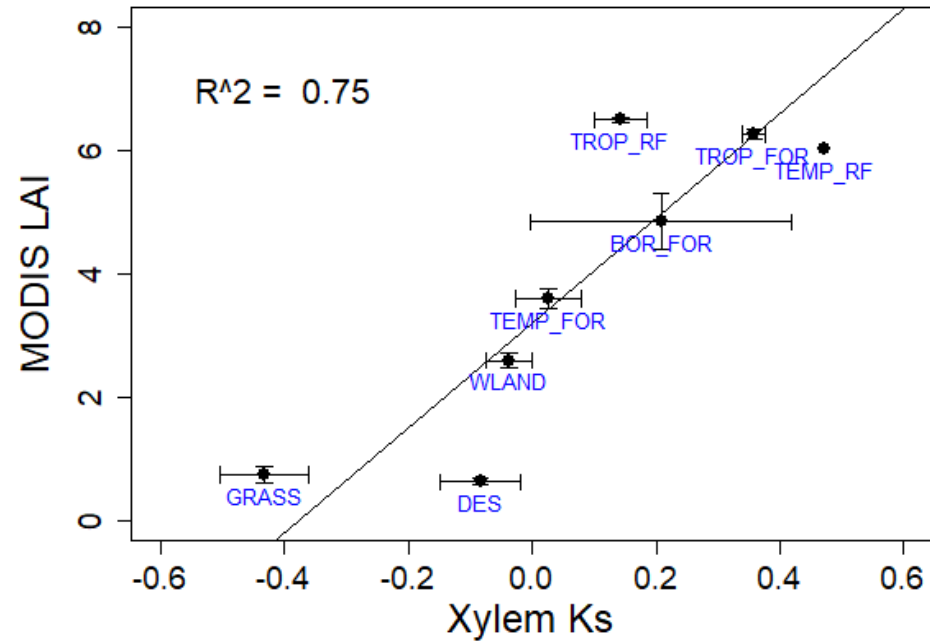
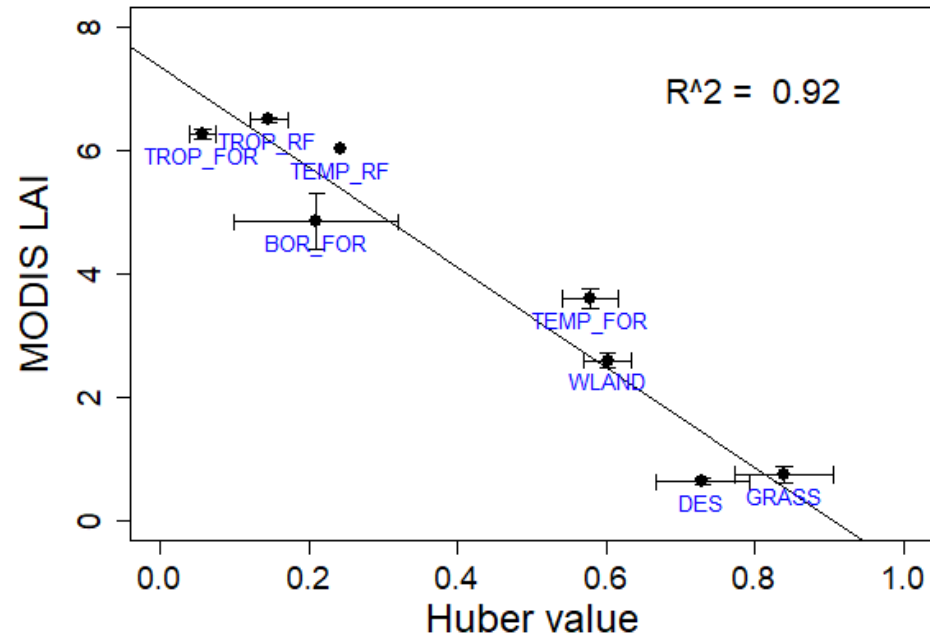
Mencuccini et al (in review *New Phy*)

How to upscale these traits

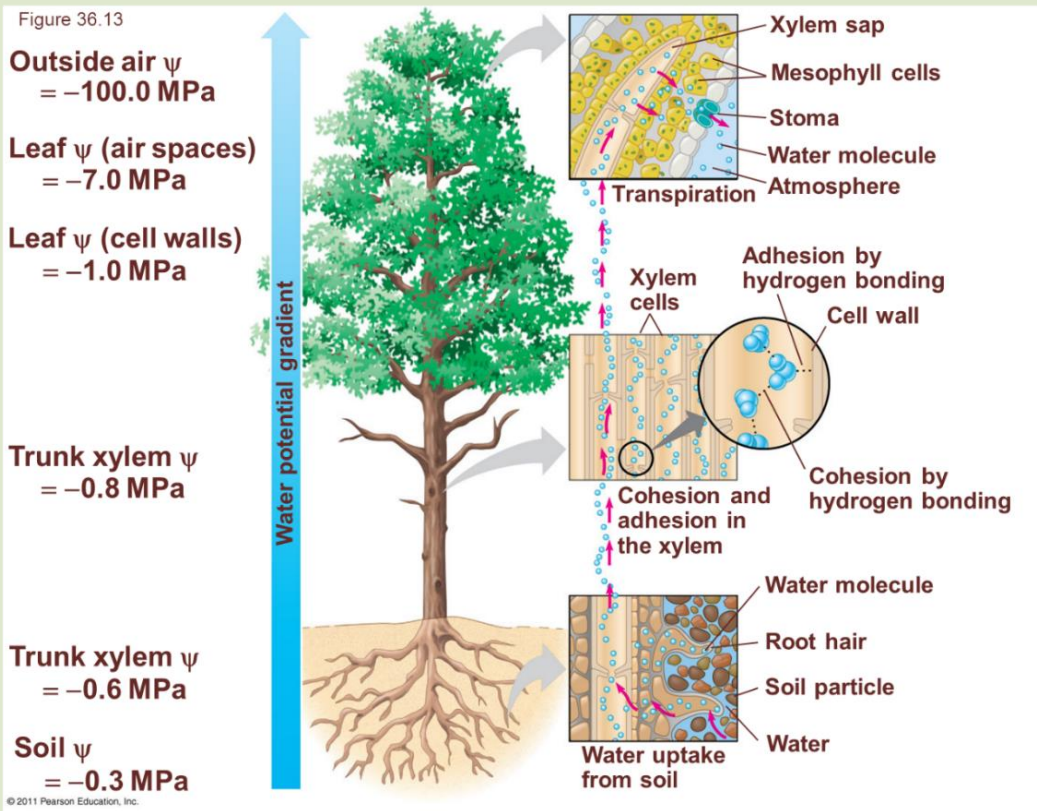


Scaling to biome LAI

N = 1,500 points



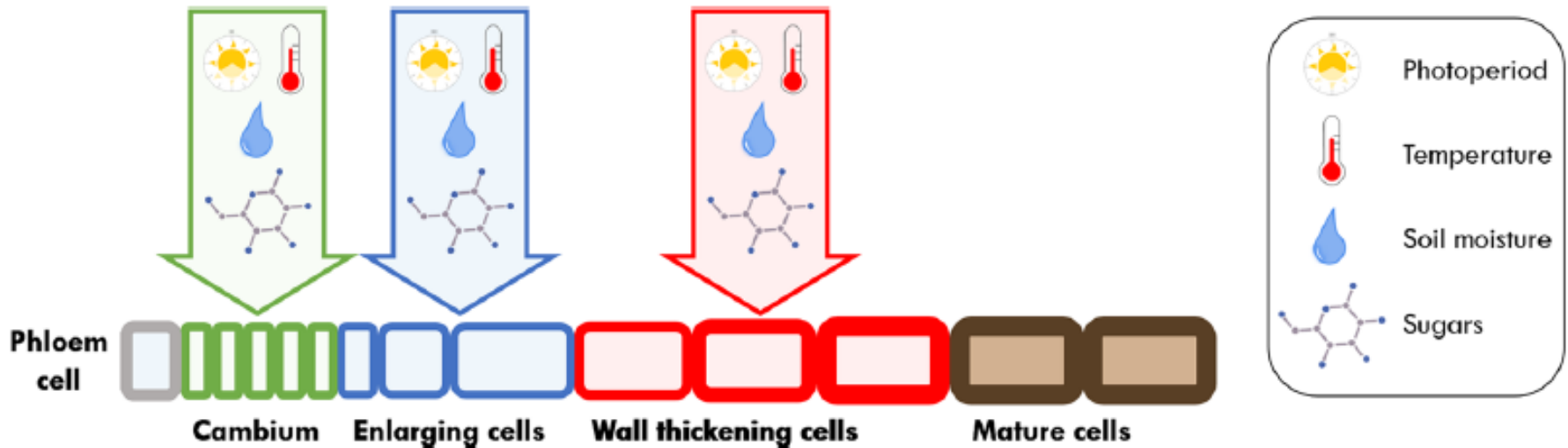
Key hydraulic traits and significance



1. Water status: water potential / content
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4. Allocation ratio: Huber Value (1/leaf-sapwood area ratio)

1. Prediction of woody growth
2. Prediction of drought-induced mortality
3. Prediction of water fluxes

1) Factors controlling tree radial growth



1) Factors controlling growth

Bud phenology



Xylogenesis

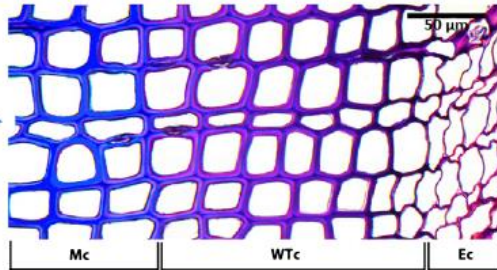
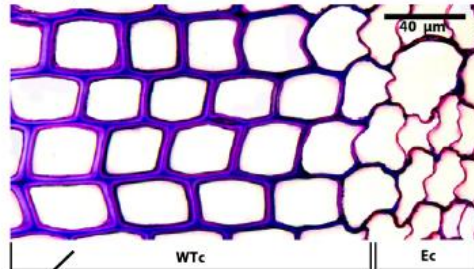
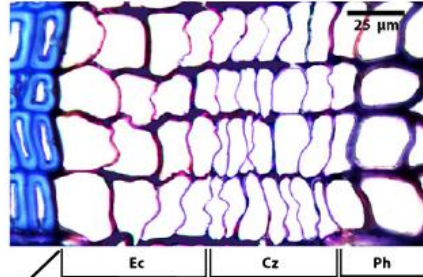


Figure 36.13

Outside air ψ
= -100.0 MPa

Leaf ψ (air spaces)
= -7.0 MPa

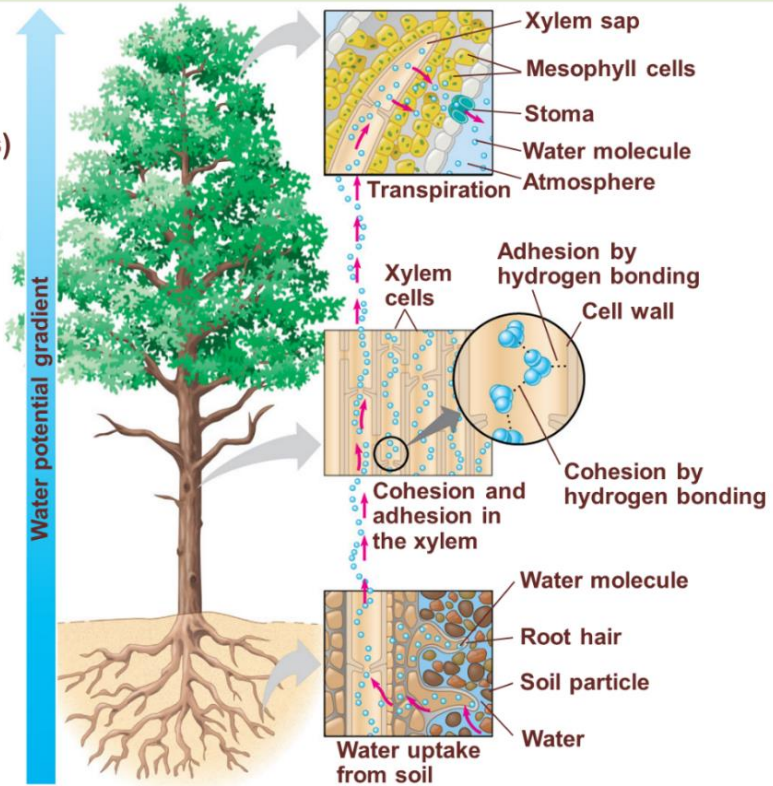
Leaf ψ (cell walls)
= -1.0 MPa

Trunk xylem ψ
= -0.8 MPa

Trunk xylem ψ
= -0.6 MPa

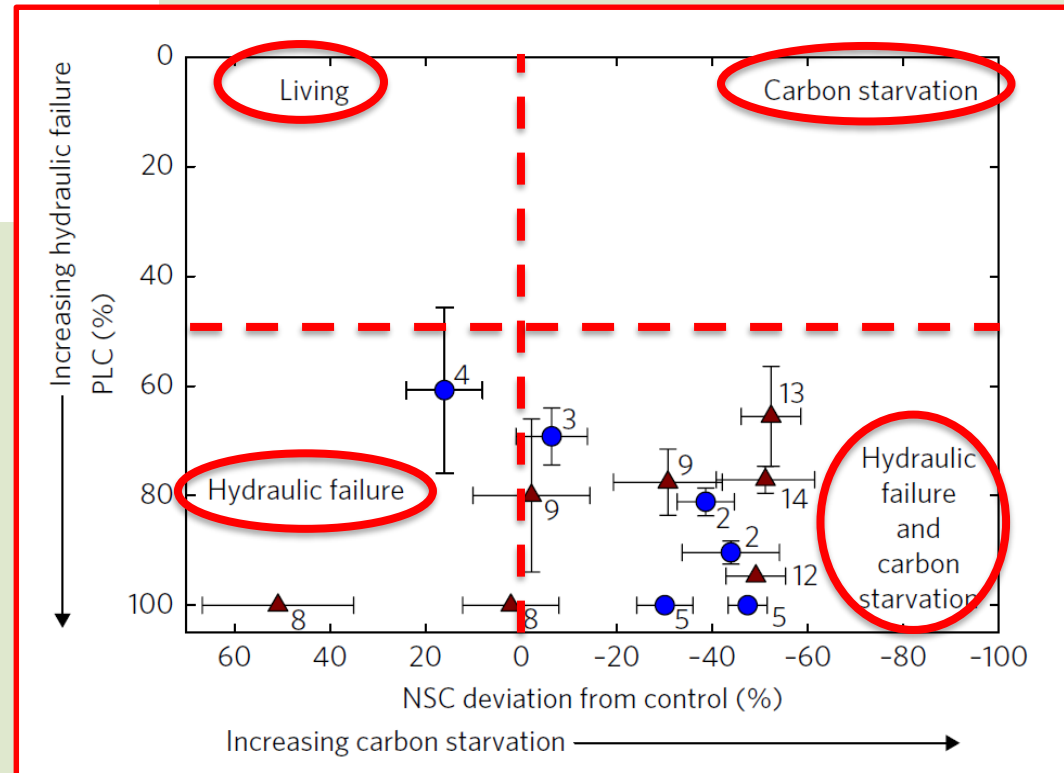
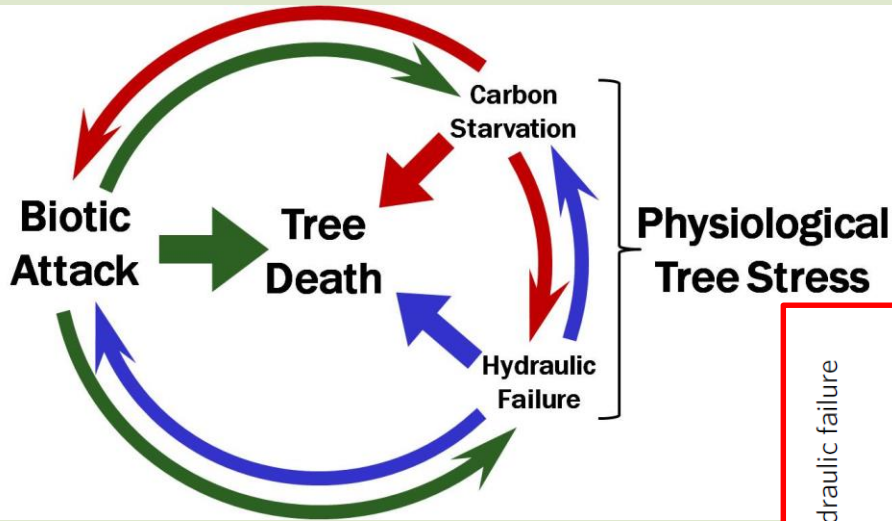
Soil ψ
= -0.3 MPa

© 2011 Pearson Education, Inc.



Huang et al (2014 *New Phy*)

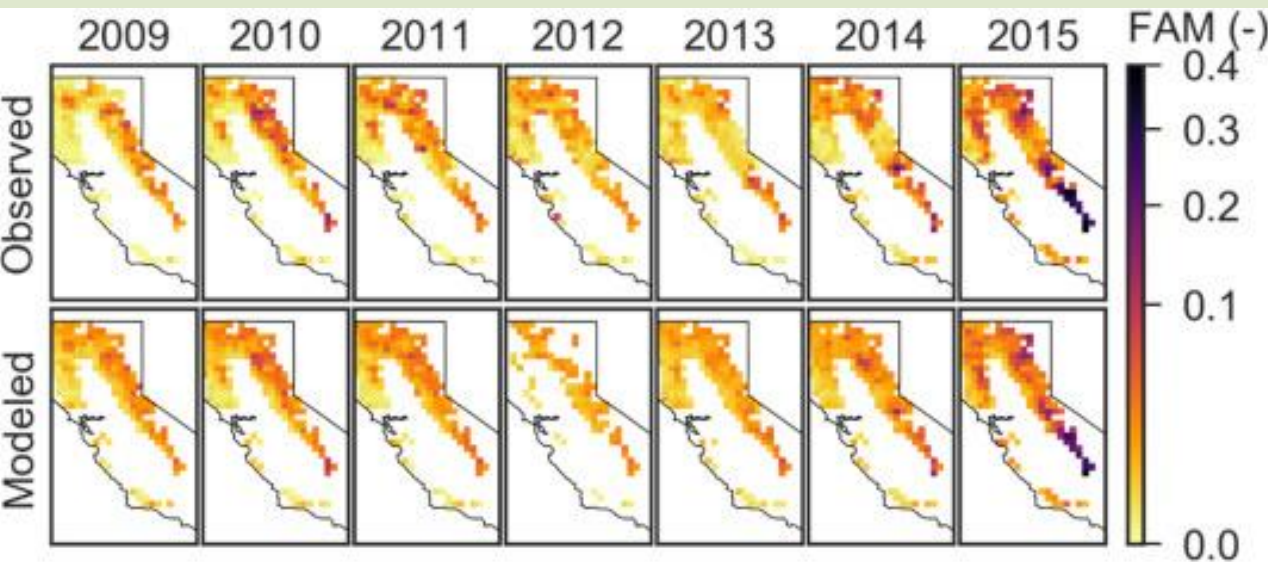
2) Prediction of drought-induced tree mortality



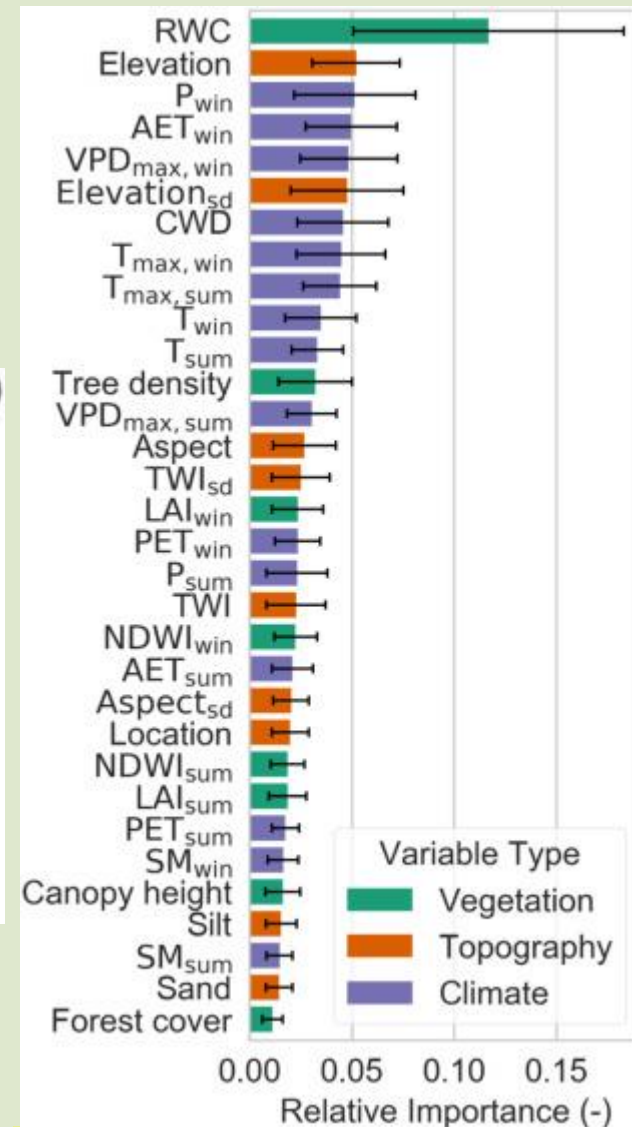
2) Prediction of tree mortality

$$\text{VOD} \propto \text{RWC}_{\text{veg}}$$

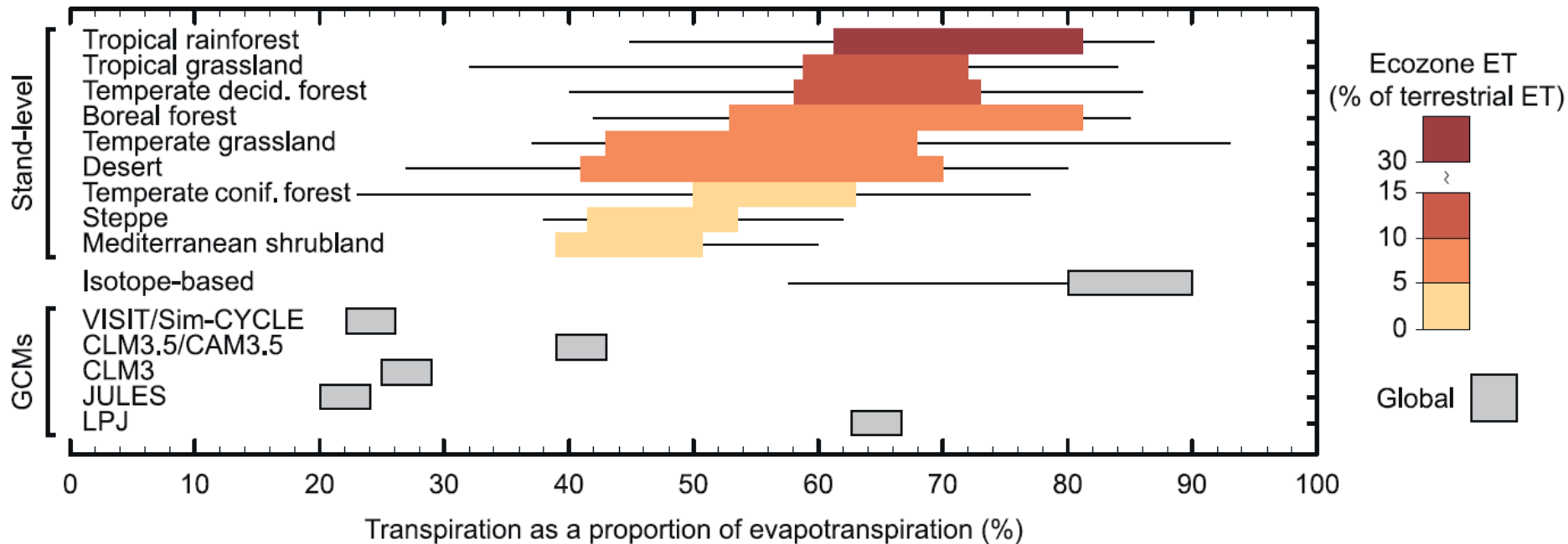
Diurnal variations in X-band of passive microwave measurements (Adv. Microw. Scann. Rad.-E or -2)



Fractional Area Mortality FAM
in California



3) Predictions of carbon and water fluxes



Jasecko et al (2013 *Nature*)

Schlesinger & Jasecko (2014 *AgForMet*)

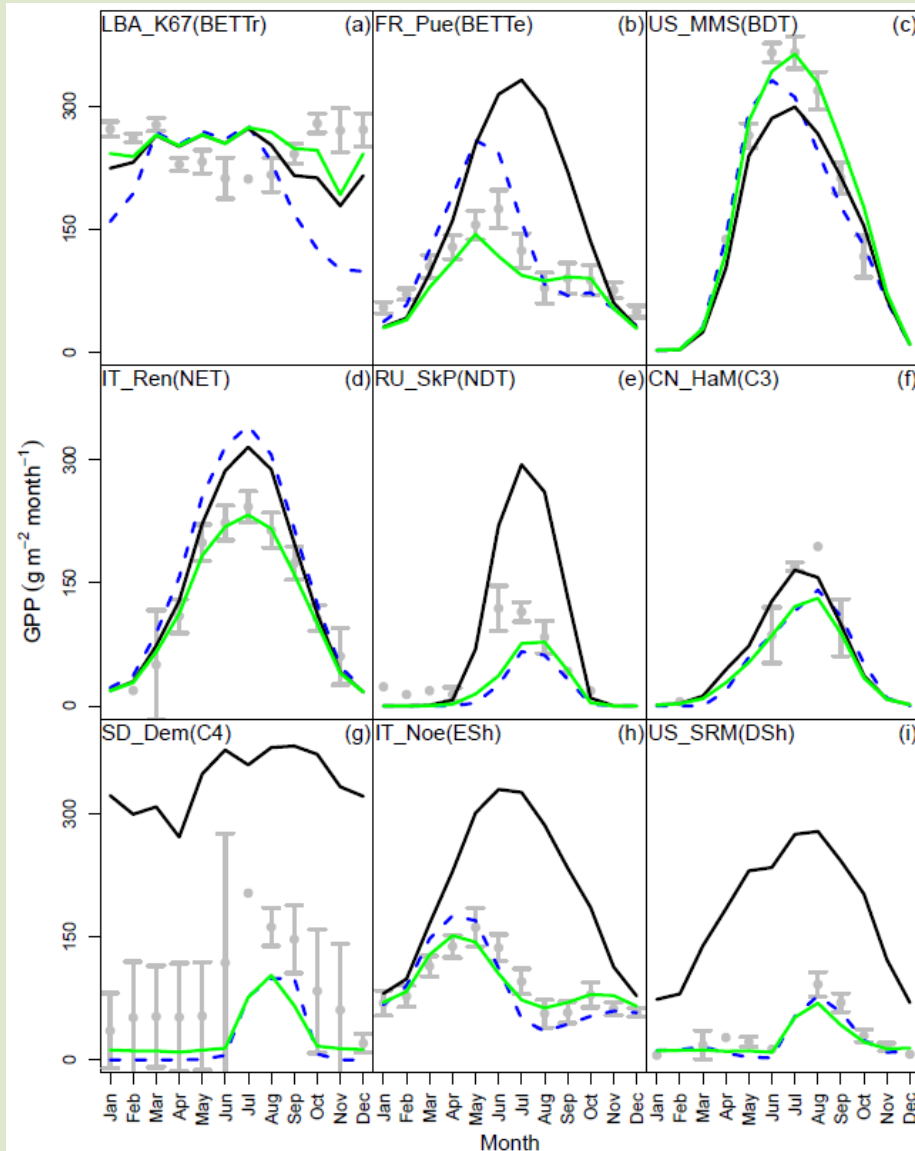
SAPFLUXNET: towards a global database of sap flow measurements

Rafael Poyatos^{1,2,6}, Víctor Granda¹, Roberto Molowny-Horas¹, Maurizio Mencuccini^{3,4}, Kathy Steppe² and Jordi Martínez-Vilalta^{1,5}



- 200 sites
- > 2000 trees

3) DVGM Prediction of water fluxes



- Global Dynamic Vegetation Models
- UK JULES
- Using global hydraulics database
- Ecosystem-scale GPP (Gross Prim. Product.)
- Fewer parameters, better predictions relative to earlier JULES

Summary

- Overview of current available toolbox (emphasis on trait-based modelling)
- With a focus on drought responses, overview of most important tissue-level traits
- Three examples for prediction of processes from plant to global scales

Concluding themes

- how lucky are you, young biologists?
- Do we want to improve our understanding of the biophysical world? Or do we want to make predictions?
- Do trait-based approaches fully explain drought responses?
- how do we think of processes across scales?