



**Universitat de les
Illes Balears**

**DOCTORAL THESIS
2017**

**"EVALUATION OF NATIVE MEDITERRANEAN
PLANT SPECIES FOR EXTENSIVE VEGETATED
ROOFS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE"**

Veriozka Andrea Azeñas Mallea



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Doctoral Programme of Biology of the plants

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ROOFS AND ENVIRONMENTAL
PERFORMANCE".**

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Ph. Doctor by the Universitat de les Illes Balears

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CERTIFICO:

Que el presente trabajo titulado "*Evaluation of Mediterranean plant species for extensive vegetated roof and environmental performance*" presentado por Veriozka Andrea Azeñas Mallea para optar al TÍTULO universitario oficial de DOCTOR por la *Universitat de les Illes Balears* dentro del programa de doctorado de Biología de las Plantas, se ha realizado bajo mi dirección.

Revisado el presente trabajo, autorizo su presentación para que pueda ser juzgada por el tribunal correspondiente.

Palma de Mallorca, 01 de Septiembre del 2017



Javier Gulías León

Director



Veriozka Azeñas Mallea

Autora

*A todas las poderosas plantas
sacrificadas en este estudio*

A las puestas de sol , a los peces que he
podido ver en el mar, a las flores pequeñas
de *límonium* y a las margaritas de las
grietas del campus, porque son la muestra
de la fortaleza y perfección natural.

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LISTA DE SÍMBOLOS Y ABREVIACIONES

| Símbolos | Significado |
|-------------------------|--|
| <i>ADM</i> | aerial dry mass |
| A_N | net CO ₂ assimilation |
| CO ₂ | carbon dioxide |
| <i>E</i> | Energy dissipation |
| g_s | stomatal conductance |
| <i>iWUE</i> | intrinsic water use efficiency |
| K_{crasas} | Coefficiente de consumo hídrico de crasas |
| $K_{densidad}$ | Coefficiente de densidad |
| $K_{herbáceas}$ | Coefficiente de consumo hídrico de herbáceas |
| $K_{jardín}$ | Coefficiente de jardín |
| K_{mc} | Coefficiente de microclima |
| K_{spp} | Coefficiente de especie |
| <i>LAR</i> | leaf area ratio |
| <i>LMA</i> | leaf mass area |
| MD | moderate drought |
| PD | predawn |
| <i>Q</i> | instantaneous heat flux |
| Q_t | hourly heat flux |
| <i>RA</i> | relative appearance |
| <i>RDM</i> | root dry mass |
| <i>RWC</i> | relative water content |
| <i>RWC_{MD}</i> | <i>midday</i> relative water content |
| <i>RWC_{PD}</i> | <i>pre dawn</i> relative water content |
| SD | severe drought |
| SLA | specific leaf area |
| SM | senescent mass |
| T_{-7} | temperature measured at 7 cm below substrate |
| T_{AIR} | air temperature |
| <i>TDM</i> | total dry mass |
| U | conductivity coefficient |
| <i>VWC</i> | soil volume water content |
| <i>WL</i> | water-limited |
| <i>WL</i> | well-watered |
| <i>WUE</i> | water use efficiency |
| <i>WUE_T</i> | water use efficiency at plant level |
| ΔT | measured temperature difference |

RESUMEN

El rápido crecimiento de las ciudades es considerado un motor del cambio global antropogénico y se ha convertido en una problemática ambiental por los diversos impactos que genera. Debido a que la mayor parte de la población mundial vive en áreas urbanas, las ciudades pueden ser consideradas como los ecosistemas óptimos para el planteamiento y promoción de medidas de mitigación a la problemática ambiental que se acrecienta en las últimas décadas. Así han surgido prácticas alternativas enfocadas a la mitigación, reducción y prevención del impacto ambiental, entre éstas la implantación de técnicas constructivas ambientalmente favorables como la implantación de cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas se constituye en una alternativa de gestión urbana sostenible, cuyo interés radica en la sinergia de los diversos beneficios ambientales que se considera es capaz de brindar.

En las ciudades, el rápido incremento de las superficies construidas limita la disponibilidad de espacios para la expansión de espacios verdes. En áreas de clima mediterráneo, a esta situación se suma la limitación de agua para riego y los largos periodos de sequía. En estas condiciones, la selección de especies adecuadas para la implementación de áreas e infraestructuras verdes adquiere una importancia capital. La presente tesis parte de la hipótesis de que las características que han permitido a algunas especies nativas del Mediterráneo adecuarse a las condiciones de estrés abiótico que caracterizan su hábitat les permitiría responder adecuadamente a las condiciones de cubierta ajardinada extensiva caracterizada por el estrés hídrico, fuertes vientos, elevada incidencia de radiación, así como por la baja disponibilidad de nutrientes.

Esta tesis doctoral pretende mejorar el entendimiento de las respuestas de 6 especies nativas: *Asteriscus maritimus*, *Brachypodium phoenicoides*, *Crithmum maritimum*, *Limonium virgatum*, *Sedum sediforme* y *Sporobolus pungens* en condiciones de cubierta ajardinada extensiva con el objetivo general de evaluar su adecuación para la implementación en cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas en condiciones de clima mediterráneo, así como evaluar las funcionalidades ambientales que éstas impulsan.

La experimentación llevada a cabo en ensayos de corta y larga duración permitió arribar a conclusiones sobre cada una de las especies estudiadas, en cuanto a

su respuesta a las condiciones típicas del sistema de cubierta ajardinada extensiva y a los efectos de la aplicación de riego limitado. Las 6 especies estudiadas mostraron, de forma general, una buena adaptación a las condiciones de cubierta ajardinada extensiva implementada en regiones con clima Mediterráneo, además las especies estudiadas mostraron una buena adaptación a las condiciones de riego deficitario (25 % ET₀), sin variaciones importantes en el valor estético, el porcentaje de cobertura. La capacidad de retención de agua y el aislamiento térmico, lo que las hace adecuadas para su implementación como componentes del sistema de cubierta vegetada. Se ha evidenciado que el diferente comportamiento de las especies determina su influencia sobre los distintos servicios ecosistémicos que brindan las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas por lo que su selección debe guiarse en función de los servicios ecosistémicos que interese priorizar.

Así mismo se evidenció que la capacidad de aislamiento térmico de las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas resultó ser potencialmente alta en regiones con clima Mediterráneo a lo largo de las cuatro estaciones del año. La presencia y tipo de vegetación influyó de manera importante en la capacidad de aislamiento de las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas y la reducción del volumen de agua de riego disminuyó el flujo de calor a través del sistema independientemente de la presencia o no de vegetación en la cubierta y del tipo de ésta.

RESUM

El ràpid creixement de les ciutats es considerat un motor del canvi global antropogènic i s'ha convertit en una problemàtica ambiental pels diversos impactes que genera. Sabent que la major part de la població mundial viu en àrees urbanes, les ciutats poden ser considerades com els ecosistemes òptims per al plantejament i promoció de mesures de mitigació a la problemàtica ambiental que ha anat augmentant en les últimes dècades. Així han sorgit pràctiques alternatives que possibiliten la mitigació, reducció i prevenció de l'impacte ambiental. Entre aquestes, la implantació de tècniques constructives ambientalment favorables com ara la implantació de cobertes enjardinades extensives, es converteix en una alternativa de gestió urbana sostenible interessant. L'interès rau en la sinèrgia dels diversos beneficis ambientals que es considera és capaç d'aportar.

A les ciutats, el ràpid increment de les superfícies construïdes limita la disponibilitat d'espais per a l'expansió d'espais verds. En àrees de clima mediterrani, a aquesta situació s'hi suma la limitació d'aigua per a reg i els llargs períodes de sequera. En aquestes condicions, la selecció d'espècies adequades per a la implementació d'àrees i infraestructures verdes adquireix una importància cabdal. La present tesi parteix de la hipòtesi que les característiques que han permès a algunes espècies natives de la Mediterrània adaptar-se a les condicions d'estrès abiòtic que caracteritzen el seu hàbitat els permetria respondre adequadament a les condicions de coberta enjardinada extensiva caracteritzada per l'elevada incidència d'estrès hídric, vent i radiació, així com per la baixa disponibilitat de nutrients.

La present tesi doctoral pretén aprofundir en la comprensió del funcionament de 6 espècies natives: *Asteriscus maritimus*, *Brachypodium phoenicoides*, *Crithmum maritimum*, *Limonium virgatum*, *Sedum sediforme* i *Sporobolus pungens* amb l'objectiu general d'avaluar la seva adequació per a la implementació en cobertes enjardinades extensives, així com de les funcionalitats ambientals que aquestes impulsen.

L'experimentació realitzada en assajos de curta i llarga durada va permetre arribar a conclusions sobre cadascuna de les espècies estudiades, pel que fa a la seva resposta a les condicions típiques del sistema de coberta enjardinada

extensiva i als efectes de l'aplicació de reg limitat. Les 6 espècies estudiades van mostrar, de forma general, una bona adaptació a les condicions de coberta enjardinada extensiva implementada en regions amb clima mediterrani, a més totes les espècies estudiades van mostrar una bona adaptació a les condicions de reg deficitari (25 % ET0), sense variacions importants en el valor estètic, el percentatge de cobertura, la capacitat de retenció d'aigua i aïllament tèrmic. Aquestes característiques les fa adequades per a la seva implementació com a components d'aquest sistema constructiu. S'ha demostrat que el diferent comportament de les espècies determina la seva influència sobre la funcionalitat ambiental de les cobertes enjardinades extensives, pel que la seva selecció ha de guiar-se en funció dels serveis ecosistèmics que interressi prioritzar.

Així mateix es va evidenciar que la capacitat d'aïllament tèrmic de les cobertes enjardinades extensives va resultar ser potencialment alta en regions amb clima mediterrani al llarg de les quatre estacions de l'any. La presència de vegetació va influir de manera important en la capacitat d'aïllament de les cobertes enjardinades extensives i la reducció del volum d'aigua de reg va disminuir el flux de calor a través del sistema independentment de la presència o no de vegetació a la coberta i del tipus d'aquesta.

ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of many urban areas is considered to be partially responsible for global change, generating several environmental impacts. Since most of the world population lives in urban areas, cities can be considered to be the right place for planning and promoting actions to mitigate those environmental impacts. In this scenario, extensive green roofs can be considered as green infrastructures that would contribute to urban sustainability due to the several ecosystem and social services that they are able to provide.

The rapid growth in cities limits the availability of green areas. In addition to this, in Mediterranean Climate areas, the water scarcity and the long lasting drought periods also reduce the extension and quality of green areas. In such scenario, plant selection appears to be a key factor for sustainable urban greening. The initial hypothesis of this Thesis is that the plant traits that have allowed the survival and growth of several Mediterranean species under harsh environments would also allow them to perform well under extensive green roof conditions, that are characterized by a high incidence of water limitation, wind and radiation, in addition to the low soil nutrient availability.

The main objective of this Thesis is to evaluate the performance of six Mediterranean native species, *Asteriscus maritimus*, *Brachypodium phoenicoides*, *Crithmum maritimum*, *Limonium virgatum*, *Sedum sediforme* and *Sporobolus pungens*, under extensive green roof conditions, and the assessment of the ecosystem and social services that they would enhance.

The experiments carried out allowed analyzing the performance of the six studied species, their mechanisms to cope with the stressful conditions of extensive green roofs, including water limitation and poor soil nutrient content. All the studied species showed a general good performance under both well-watered and water-limited conditions (50 % and 25 % of ET_0), with low variations in their relative appearance, soil cover, storm water management and thermal insulation capacity, what suggests the interest of their use in extensive green roofs implementation. However, the results show that species differ in the ecosystem and social services that it enhances, what highlights that plant selection for extensive green roofs should be done taking into consideration the functionality that has to be prioritized.

Moreover, the thermal insulation capacity of extensive green roofs appeared to be high under Mediterranean Climate conditions regardless the season. The presence of vegetation and its characteristics significantly affected the thermal insulation capacity and the reduction of water irrigation significantly increased the reduction of heat flux regardless the vegetation presence and type.

LISTA DE PUBLICACIONES DERIVADAS DE ESTA TESIS

Esta tesis es presentada en formato de “Monografía” sin embargo de su desarrollo derivan los siguientes artículos científicos:

Azeñas V., Janner I., Medrano H. and Gulías J., 2017. Evaluation of six Mediterranean species for extensive green roofs under water-limiting conditions. *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening*. (Enviado)

Azeñas V*, Janner I., Medrano H. and Gulías J., 2017. Performance evaluation of five Mediterranean species to optimize ecosystem services of green roofs under water limiting conditions. *Landscape and urban planning* (Enviado)

V. Azeñas, J. Cuxart, R. Picos, H. Medrano, G. Simó, A. López-Grifol, J. Gulías, 2017. Thermal regulation capacity of a green roof system in the Mediterranean region: The effects of vegetation and irrigation level. *Energy and Buildings*. (Enviado)

INTRODUCCIÓN

El crecimiento de la población urbana mundial del último siglo ha superado en aproximadamente un 50% el crecimiento urbano del siglo anterior y, lo que es aún más alarmante, su proyección sugiere que en los próximos 50 años la población urbana representará el 95% del total. Este rápido incremento sin precedentes es considerado uno de los motores del cambio global. Así mismo, los impactos ambientales del cambio global afectan radicalmente a los ecosistemas urbanos, quedando claro que las ciudades son parte del problema y, por tanto, deben ser parte también de la solución a escala local y global (Duarte et al., 2006; Grimm et al., 2015).

La problemática ambiental urbana tiene serias implicaciones sobre la salud y el bienestar de sus habitantes por lo que es considerada un reto en la disciplina de la ecología. En este contexto se desarrolla la ecología urbana como una disciplina que integra la teoría y los métodos de las ciencias naturales y sociales para aplicarlos al ámbito urbano. La ecología urbana permite el estudio de los patrones urbanísticos y naturales, para conducir los sistemas adaptativos y distribuir de mejor manera los servicios ecosistémicos (Power, 2001).

Son varias las alteraciones ambientales que generan los ecosistemas urbanos, entre éstas las más reconocidas son: i) cambios de uso de suelo, directamente relacionados con una excesiva demanda de servicios e insumos que incrementan el uso de recursos naturales, energía y generación de residuos contaminantes (se atribuye a las ciudades el 40% de las emisiones de gases de efecto invernadero y el 78% de las emisiones de carbono) (Rafael et al., 2016; Grimm et al., 2015); ii) cambio climático, con modificaciones climáticas antropogénicas bien documentadas que están relacionadas con alteraciones en los rangos de temperaturas e incremento de temperaturas medias, el efecto de la isla de calor urbana y alteración de la frecuencia de precipitaciones entre otros; iii) modificación de los sistemas hidrológicos naturales que surge a causa del incremento de superficies impermeables que impiden la infiltración del agua de escorrentía y afectan a la calidad del agua en las ciudades; y iv) cambios en la biodiversidad. Todos estos impactos ambientales son ocasionados por el crecimiento de las ciudades, las cuales ocupan tan sólo el 3% de la superficie del planeta (Grimm et al., 2015).

Debido a las repercusiones socioeconómicas de la problemática descrita, en las últimas décadas se han planeado alternativas sostenibles que respondan al

desafío que supone el crecimiento urbano. En este contexto, las infraestructuras verdes han sido identificadas como una interesante y eficiente alternativa de mitigación. Las definiciones tienen un margen de variación, sin embargo, la mayoría indica que las infraestructuras verdes son un conjunto de elementos naturales capaces de proveer servicios ecosistémicos (Bendell et al., 2010). Entre el 40% y 50% de las superficies urbanas están ocupadas por construcciones, por ende, la escasez de espacio horizontal disponible y los altos precios de su adquisición (Mentens et al., 2006; Oberndorfer et al., 2007) limitan la oportunidad de incrementar el área verde, por lo que resulta necesario considerar el uso de alternativas tecnológicas como los "techos verdes" o "paredes vegetales" que permiten aprovechar el espacio cubierto. Los "techos verdes" son una tecnología ancestral que ha sido revalorizada en las últimas décadas debido a la acción sinérgica de los diferentes servicios ecosistémicos que potencialmente tienen capacidad de proveer (Oberndorfer et al., 2007).

1.1 Definiciones

Los "techos verdes" también conocidos como "cubiertas ajardinadas", "tejados ecológicos", "techos vivos", etc., entre otras denominaciones (Francis and Lorimer, 2011), son definidos básicamente como estructuras de cubierta cuya última capa está constituida por vegetación. El tipo de especies vegetales que alberga un tejado verde define la metodología a utilizar para su implementación, la eficiencia de los servicios ecosistémicos que provee y en gran parte su apariencia y color.

Así, el color verde no siempre es el predominante, existiendo también tejados predominantemente marrones, rojos o amarillos según la estación del año. Desde este punto de vista llamar "techos verdes" o "cubiertas verdes" a este tipo de infraestructuras sugeriría descartar la posibilidad de aceptar las condiciones naturales de la vegetación, y es por esta razón que, en el presente documento, se utilizarán las expresiones: "Cubiertas ajardinadas" o "Cubiertas vegetadas". A continuación, se caracterizan los dos tipos de metodologías implementadas en estas cubiertas. (Johnston and Newton, 2004):

Metodología intensiva

Esta metodología es aplicada en las cubiertas ajardinadas capaces de albergar una mayor diversidad de especies tanto nativas como exóticas, y una mayor cantidad de biomasa. El objetivo principal de los tejados en los que se aplica esta metodología es proveer de espacios aptos para más de un uso: expansión, cultivo de alimentos, etc. Dado el diverso tamaño de las plantas que alberga, el sustrato del sistema tiene al menos 20 cm de alto y requiere riego suplementario y manejo intensivo, dichas características implican mayor inversión, mayor refuerzo de infraestructura, y altos costos de mantenimiento (Costello et al., 2000; Minke, 1992; Speak et al., 2013) (Fig.1.1).

Metodología extensiva

Las cubiertas ajardinadas que aplican la metodología extensiva se caracterizan por una vegetación compuesta mayoritariamente por musgos, especies suculentas, gramíneas u otras especies capaces de resistir las condiciones ambientales extremas que caracterizan a las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas en particular. Esta metodología de implementación tiene un sustrato poco profundo (entre 3 y 15 cm) (Minke, 1992) y menor proporción de materia orgánica (Bevilacqua et al., 2015), por lo que permiten un control adecuado de la acumulación de biomasa implicando menores costos de inversión, mantenimiento y menores necesidades de riego.

En regiones climáticas con precipitaciones constantes y generalmente abundantes, las cubiertas extensivas pueden prescindir de riego (Getter and Rowe, 2006; VanWoert et al., 2005; Van Mechelen et al., 2015), sin embargo, en regiones áridas, semi áridas y Mediterráneas con periodos largos sin precipitación, el riego suplementario es frecuentemente sugerido para asegurar el establecimiento de la vegetación, buen desenvolvimiento de las plantas y alcanzar la efectividad de los beneficios ambientales. Así mismo, la reducción de las condiciones de estrés hídrico haitual en estos ambientes permite albergar una mayor diversidad de especies en este tipo de cubiertas (Schweitzer and Erell, 2014; Van Mechelen et al., 2015; Vestrella, 2015).

En la actualidad, en los proyectos de cubiertas ajardinadas en el Mediterráneo el riego a capacidad de campo es la práctica más frecuente, su aplicación resulta económicamente factible dado que los costos que implica la replantación y mantenimiento, así como los gastos en energía para enfriamiento, son más elevados.

Las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas tienen como ventaja estructural un peso menor a 160 kg/m^2 (Minke, 1992), lo que reduce el riesgo de daños a la infraestructura del inmueble. Según los productos comerciales que se incluyan en la cubierta ajardinada extensiva y según la saturación de agua, el peso de estas cubiertas oscila entre 102 y 150 kg/m^2 (Zin Co, 2012) (Fig. 1.2). El presente estudio se centra en este tipo de cubiertas ajardinadas.



Figura 1.1. Cubierta ajardinada intensiva Fachvereinigung Bauwerks Begrünung E.V. (FBB) - Alemania. (European Federation Green roof and walls 2016)

Figura 1.2. Cubierta ajardinada extensiva. Asociación nacional de coberturas verdes, Portugal (European Federation Green roof and walls 2016).

1.2 Cubierta ajardinada extensiva y componentes

A fin de incluir vegetación sobre una infraestructura urbana en sustitución de una cubierta convencional, se asume la implementación de una estructura o sistema especial que proteja la infraestructura construida y haga viable la incorporación de las especies vegetales.

El sistema de cubierta vegetada incluye varios componentes diseñados con características ingenieriles que permiten la adaptación del sistema a la respectiva infraestructura sobre la cual se instalará. Es importante recalcar que

la implementación de un sistema de cubierta ajardinada no requiere necesariamente de una fábrica o proveedor especializado, pues pueden utilizarse materiales locales, reciclados o reutilizados cuya instalación esté a cargo del usuario (Bates et al., 2015; Ondoño et al., 2016).

Sin embargo, el sistema de cubierta ajardinada extensiva considerado en el marco de este estudio, es el ofrecido por las empresas proveedoras locales, por ser éstos los que mostraron mayor eficiencia y mejor funcionalidad a la hora de implementar cubiertas ajardinadas extensiva (Vijayaraghavan, 2016). El sistema de las cubiertas ajardinadas tendrá una estructura correcta cuando ofrezca una larga duración, permita un drenaje permanente, proporcione un balance agua/aire adecuado y cuya carga y requisitos de mantenimiento encajen adecuadamente con la infraestructura que lo alberga.

La ubicación de las cubiertas ajardinadas, la climatología del sitio, los costos y los requerimientos constructivos definirán la estructura del sistema, la inclusión de los diferentes componentes, accesorios y la elección de cada uno. Se considera a la vegetación como un componente del sistema, (Vijayaraghavan, 2016), dado que el objetivo del presente estudio está enfocado en la vegetación, éste componente será tratado en un apartado diferente.

Dependiendo de la empresa proveedora, existen varios tipos de sistemas de cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas, los mismos han sido diseñados principalmente en función a la pendiente de la cubierta y la vegetación que se pretenda albergar. En el marco de las características experimentales a desarrollar en este documento se describe el modelo de cubierta ajardinada extensiva utilizado en la presente tesis y que deriva del sistema comercial "Tapizante floral" (Zin Co, 2012) (Fig. 1.3).

Sustrato

Es el componente del sistema con mayor grado de influencia sobre su eficiencia y su funcionalidad. El uso de sustrato comercial es el más frecuente, aunque no deja de recomendarse la utilización de materiales locales o reutilizados (Ondoño et al, 2016).

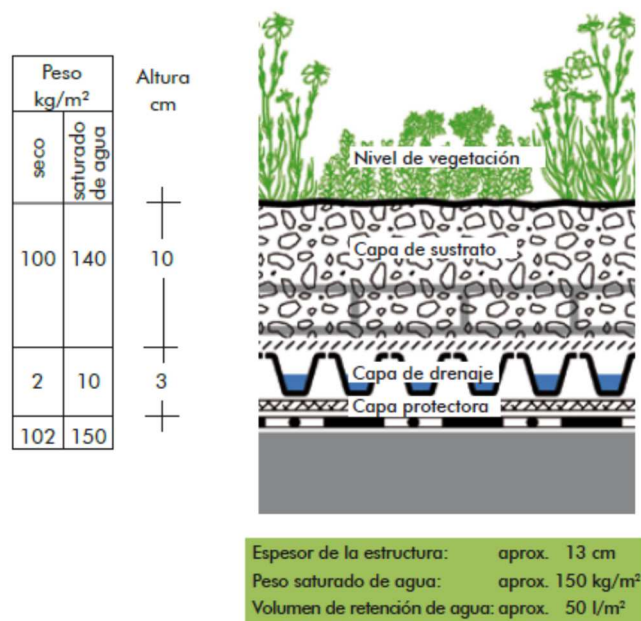


Figura 1.3. Sistema de cubierta ajardinada extensiva. Disposición de los componentes (Zin Co, 2012)

Los materiales incluidos en las mezclas de sustrato incluyen principalmente: piedra pómez, zeolita, vermiculita (Li et al., 2016; Vijayaraghavan et al., 2012), perlita (Zhao et al., 2014), turba y ladrillo triturado (Ondoño et al., 2015). Diversos estudios han evaluado diferentes mezclas para su uso como sustratos en las cubiertas ajardinadas (Angela K. Durhman et al., 2007; Emilsson, 2008; Young et al., 2014) y sus resultados tienden a señalar que se debe priorizar el equilibrio entre la capacidad de retención de agua, el agua disponible para las plantas y la porosidad del sustrato pues, por un lado, de éstas dependen el drenaje (Vijayaraghavan, 2016) y el peso o carga del sistema y, por el otro, influyen de manera directa sobre el estado de la vegetación. Así mismo, en general se considera altamente recomendable que la materia orgánica del sustrato del sistema de las cubiertas ajardinadas no supere el 15% (Tolderlund, 2010). No obstante, existe cierta controversia en este punto, así la guía alemana para la implementación de cubiertas vegetadas “Forschungsgesellschaft Landschaftsentwicklung Landschaftsbau (FLL)”, recomienda la inclusión de 6% a 8% (FLL, 2010) de compost orgánico, mientras otros autores sugieren que la inclusión de un 30% puede mejorar las propiedades físicas del suelo para la sobrevivencia y crecimiento de las plantas (Ondoño et al., 2015). El contenido

regulado de materia orgánica y nutrientes es un factor determinante a la hora de regular el drenaje, el exceso de carga por producción de biomasa y la carga del sistema en sí mismo, aunque, por otro lado el bajo contenido de materia orgánica supone un factor de estrés para la vegetación y se constituye en limitante para la inclusión de mayor diversidad de especies (Emilsson, 2008).

La profundidad del sustrato es otra característica clave del sistema, pues ésta influye sobre el crecimiento y el rendimiento de las especies, así como en las retenciones de agua y la capacidad térmica (Pérez et al., 2015; Schroll et al., 2011)

El sustrato de las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas no supera los 20 cm, siendo también frecuente la implementación de cubiertas de 4 a 5 cm profundidad en las que se ha comprobado que aunque con serias limitaciones, es posible la implantación de otras especies además de las suculentas (Dunnett et al., 2008; Durhman et al., 2007; Emilsson, 2008; Nagase and Dunnett, 2010; Ondoño et al., 2016).

Filtro

El filtro suele consistir en un geotextil fabricado con polipropileno resistente al estrés mecánico, está ubicado entre el sustrato y el sistema de drenaje siendo su función mantenerlos separados a fin de evitar que las partículas de sustrato colmaten el drenaje.

Sistema de drenaje

Este elemento es una estructura plástica (poliolefina reciclada), posee cavidades para retener el agua y aperturas para aireación y difusión, además de un sistema de canales multidireccionales por la cara inferior. De esta manera, tiene una doble función, por una parte, permite la evacuación del exceso de agua y, por la otra, almacena una determinada cantidad de agua (entre 3 y 6 mm) en sus cavidades. Su peso es de 2,0 kg/m² y su altura de 40 mm, aunque estas características dependen del modelo de fabricación.

Manta de protección

Se trata de un componente fabricado con fibra sintética (Protección mat SSM 45; ZinCo GmbH), resistente al estrés mecánico y a la perforación de raíces. Su principal función es la retención de agua y nutrientes por lo que está ubicado del sistema de drenaje.

1.3 Vegetación

La vegetación se constituye en el componente clave de las cubiertas ajardinadas y es el elemento de interacción de la infraestructura con el ambiente. Dado el importante rol de la vegetación en el desempeño de las funcionalidades ambientales de las cubiertas ajardinadas, la selección de especies vegetales tiene una importancia relevante a la hora de su implementación y el estudio de sus características morfológicas y fisiológicas se ha constituido en un tema de investigación frecuentemente abordado en las últimas décadas. En este contexto, la preferencia por especies nativas ha sido promovida para la implementación de cubiertas ajardinadas (Butler et al., 2012; Li and Yeung, 2014), habiéndose identificado ventajas entre las que destaca la mayor capacidad de estas especies de sobrellevar de manera óptima las condiciones de estrés de sus hábitats naturales, siendo éstas similares a las que se presentan sobre una cubierta ajardinada extensiva (temperaturas extremas, poca disponibilidad de agua en especial durante los meses estivales, altos niveles de exposición a la radiación solar, escasez de nutrientes, entre otros), este idea permite sugerir que las especies nativas presentan baja necesidad de mantenimiento (principalmente riego y fertilización), el beneficio a la biodiversidad del entorno permitiendo la restauración natural de los ecosistemas urbanos (Lundholm, 2005; Van Mechelen et al., 2014; Li and Yeung, 2014)

La adaptación natural de las especies a las condiciones extremas les otorga características funcionales como el bajo consumo hídrico, la reducción de biomasa aérea, la regulación estomática, entre otras; estas facilitan su sobrevivencia y permiten su crecimiento (Benvenuti and Bacci, 2010; Blanusa et al., 2013; Farrell et al., 2013; Maclvor and Lundholm, 2011; Maclvor et al., 2011, 2013; Eksi, 2017; Schweitzer and Erell, 2014). En el contexto de las cubiertas

vegetadas esto conduce a una óptima cobertura del área y contribuye a la eficiencia de esta técnica constructiva.

En la región Mediterránea, abundan hábitats montañosos y zonas costeras con las condiciones extremas mencionadas, pobladas por especies adaptadas a las mismas (Galmés and Flexas, 2005; Galmés et al, 2010; Gulías et al., 2002; Medrano, 2009) y por ende potencialmente adecuadas a la implementación de cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas

El clima mediterráneo se caracteriza por veranos con altas temperaturas y periodos largos de sequía, estas condiciones limitan el desarrollo de especies C₃; por otro lado las bajas temperaturas en invierno afectan a las especies perennes C₄ o CAM haciendo complicada la selección de especies (Durhman et al., 2007; Schmidt et al., 1993). Por lo explicado, el bajo consumo de agua es una característica esencial para lograr la sobrevivencia de las plantas en esta región (Medrano et al., 2009). Por esta razón en jardinería se ha hecho frecuente el uso de especies de la familia de las Crasuláceas, particularmente las especies del género *Sedum* son las más utilizadas en la implementación de cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas. Se han registrado altos porcentajes de sobrevivencia y cobertura de área en ensayos con este tipo de especies (Monterusso et al., 2005; Nektarios et al., 2014; Rowe, 2011; Thuring et al., 2010). El metabolismo CAM (Crassulacean Acid Metabolism) permite a estas especies abrir los estomas y absorber el CO₂ atmosférico durante la noche, manteniéndolos cerrados durante el día, lo que reduce sus demandas de evapotranspiración. Así mismo, su sistema radicular es considerado poco agresivo y no representa un riesgo para la estructura del sistema de cubierta vegetada extensiva. Estas particularidades son ventajosas a la hora de implementar esta práctica (Bevilacqua et al., 2015; Butler et al., 2012; Gritti et al., 2006; Price et al., 2013; Tanaka et al., 2016; Blanusa et al., 2013; Monterusso et al., 2005). Así también resulta interesante referirse al metabolismo C₄, considerado como una vía fotosintética de mayor rendimiento, las especies C₄ pueden tener un crecimiento óptimo incluso en condiciones de escasez severa de agua a través de la protección del sistema hídrico (cierre estomático), al mismo tiempo son capaces de fijar CO₂ en bajas concentraciones, lo que las caracteriza por su alta eficiencia en el uso de agua (alta asimilación de CO₂ con baja apertura estomática). Esto representaría una interesante ventaja en sistemas de cubierta ajardinada extensiva en climas

mediterráneos en los que diferentes especies C₄ han tenido una exitosa implementación (Dirks, 2016 ; Medrano, 2007; Price et al., 2013).

El Mediterráneo, además de presentar veranos secos y cálidos, también se caracteriza por épocas lluviosas en las cuales el manejo del agua de escorrentía se ha constituido en un problema urbano (Jefferies and Doménech, 2015). Como se ha mencionado en un apartado anterior, la capacidad de retención de agua de escorrentía se considera un beneficio o servicio ecosistémico de las cubiertas vegetadas (Fioretti et al., 2010; Palla et al., 2008). Aunque la influencia que tiene la vegetación en este mecanismo de gestión del agua de escorrentía es menor a la del sustrato o a la del sistema de drenaje, no es despreciable (Schroll et al., 2011; Dunnet et al 2008). En este sentido, las especies de "moderado o alto" consumo hídrico resultan más adecuadas para lograr una gestión eficiente del agua de escorrentía (Farrell et al., 2013; Lundholm et al., 2010; Maclvor et al., 2011).

Algunas especies de plantas herbáceas han sido identificadas por su buen rendimiento en sistemas de cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas, así se sugiere que algunas gramíneas (entre otras herbáceas), consideradas de alto consumo hídrico pueden mejorar la capacidad de reducción de agua de escorrentía, por otra parte este alto requerimiento hídrico resultaría desfavorable en periodos de escasez hídrica, de no ser por las estrategias del uso de agua que las especies sugeridas como aptas presentan. Entre las estrategias de acople a condiciones de sequía está la reducción de biomasa aérea, la reducción del tamaño de hoja, el comportamiento isohídrico (Farrell et al., 2013; Maclvor et al., 2013; Maclvor and Lundholm, 2011; Nagase and Dunnett, 2010b; Raimondo et al., 2015) y la sensibilidad estomática (Flexas et al, 2006; Galmés et al., 2007; Gulías et al., 2012; Valladares and Sánchez-Gómez, 2006). En ensayos experimentales aplicados a la implementación de cubiertas ajardinadas se han identificado diferentes especies de herbáceas con un alto porcentaje de sobrevivencia y buena capacidad de recuperación a la sequía (Maclvor and Lundholm, 2011; Farrell et al. 2013; Nagase and Dunnett 2010; Eski et al., 2017).

La producción de biomasa resulta también un factor que hace compleja la selección, en este sentido, estudios precedentes han mostrado que la elevada producción de biomasa tiende, por una parte, a mejorar la aceptación de las cubiertas por los residentes en las ciudades (White and Gatersleben, 2011),

además mejora la capacidad de aislamiento térmico por sombreado (Bevilacqua et al., 2015; Hien et al., 2003; Price et al., 2013; Speak et al., 2013) y potencia la captura de agua (Farrell et al., 2013; MacIvor and Lundholm, 2011; Schroll et al., 2011), mientras que por la otra incrementa los gastos de mantenimiento y el consumo de agua.

Se ha evidenciado la influencia de la vegetación sobre la capacidad de aislamiento térmico de la cubierta, particularmente de ciertas características de ésta como son: el índice de área foliar, altura de planta, grosor de hoja, capacidad de cobertura y actividad fotosintética (tasa de transpiración) (Barrio, 1998; Theodosiou, 2003). En este sentido, se ha evidenciado el aporte de herbáceas y crasas las primeras por sus altas tasas de transpiración, y por la capacidad de sombreado de ambas (según sea su arquitectura) (Blanusa et al., 2013; Lundholm et al., 2010; Price et al., 2013; Eski, 2017). Por lo expuesto las características mencionadas se deben tomar en consideración a la hora de seleccionar especies para la implementación de cubiertas cuya función principal pretenda ser el aislamiento térmico.

Se han observado diferencias importantes entre especies dentro de un mismo grupo funcional en cuanto a la producción de biomasa, la sobrevivencia, la capacidad de aislamiento térmico y el consumo de agua (Wolf and Lundholm, 2008), lo que sugiere la conveniencia de evaluar individualmente las especies y su potencial de implantación en cubiertas ajardinadas, sin dejar de lado los experimentos que estudian el efecto de la diversidad y de la interacción de vegetación de la cubierta (Emilsson, 2008; Nagase and Dunnett, 2011).

Resulta más fácil intuir la influencia de la selección de vegetación en el valor estético de una cubierta ajardinada, sin embargo, la cuantificación de este parámetro, la exploración de una metodología adecuada y la información disponible en este campo son limitadas (Fernandez-Cañero et al., 2013; MacIvor et al., 2011). Según estudios precedentes, el valor estético de las plantas se ve afectado de manera importante por la disponibilidad hídrica, evidenciándose pérdidas de color, senescencia de las hojas y reducción del periodo de floración (Dunnett et al., 2008; Nagase and Dunnett, 2010b; Benvenuti and Bacci, 2010; Williams et al., 2010; Vestrella, 2015). Diversos trabajos sugieren enfocar la investigación futura en el desarrollo de aproximaciones a la cuantificación del valor estético de la vegetación, incluyendo parámetros tales como la coloración,

la forma, la variación estacional, la valoración del usuario entre otros (Benvenuti and Bacci, 2010; Dunnett et al., 2008b; Angela K Durhman et al., 2007; Emilsson, 2008; Fernandez-Cañero et al., 2013; Lundholm et al., 2010; MacIvor et al., 2013; Monterusso et al., 2005; Nagase and Dunnett, 2010b).

1.4 Servicios ecosistémicos de las cubiertas ajardinadas

Efecto de aislamiento térmico

Entre los beneficios que las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas son capaces de proveer, destaca la capacidad de regulación térmica de los edificios por su impacto económico y ambiental (Fernandez-Cañero et al., 2013; Raji et al., 2015; Vijayaraghavan, 2016).

Varios estudios han demostrado que las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas reducen la temperatura superficial, la temperatura del interior del edificio (o del habitáculo) y la radiación incidente. Este proceso de aislamiento se da por dos mecanismos (Raji, 2015), i) sombreado: reduciendo la radiación solar que llega a la cubierta de una infraestructura de construcción y ii) evapotranspiración: que contribuye a la capacidad de enfriamiento a través de los fenómenos de transferencia de agua del suelo a la atmósfera y paso del agua a través de los estomas a la atmósfera durante las funciones biológicas de la vegetación (fotosíntesis, transpiración, respiración y evaporación) (Barrio, 1998; Blanusa et al., 2013; Charoenkit and Yiemwattana, 2016; Fioretti et al., 2010; Hien et al., 2003). Ambos efectos modifican el proceso de transferencia de calor; se ha estimado que el 27% de la radiación incidente en una cubierta ajardinada es reflejada, el 60% es absorbida por las plantas y, únicamente, el 13% atraviesa la estructura de la cubierta (Vijayaraghavan et al., 2012).

Por otra parte, se ha visto que el flujo de calor que atraviesa las cubiertas convencionales de las edificaciones puede ser reducido por la presencia de una cubierta ajardinada (Ascione et al., 2013; Blanusa et al., 2013; Butler and Orians, 2011; Getter et al., 2011; Speak et al., 2013) dicha reducción alcanzaría hasta un 167% en verano, y un 3% en primavera (Getter et al., 2011). Un sistema de cubierta vegetada genera aislamiento térmico reduciendo la ganancia y la pérdida de calor por lo que este aislamiento, con sus diferencias, se da tanto en invierno como en verano (Bevilacqua et al., 2015; Eksi, 2017) Al respecto se ha

observado que la reducción en ganancia de calor podría alcanzar el 98% en verano, mientras en invierno la de pérdida de calor puede reducirse un 50% (Snell, 2009).

La regulación térmica supone ahorro energético y económico a la hora de reducir el gasto de energía en calefacción y aire acondicionado (Lazzarin et al., 2005; Niachou et al., 2001; Saiz et al., 2006; Zinzi and Agnoli, 2012). Estudios en la región Mediterránea, han simulado el ahorro energético que se genera por la instalación de cubiertas ajardinadas. Los resultados reportan un ahorro energético que alcanza el 6% (Saiz et al, 2006) en la ciudad de Madrid y hasta el 12% en Barcelona y el Cairo (Zinzi y Agnoli, 2012). Resulta importante recalcar que el ahorro energético alcanzado en invierno puede limitarse debido a la reducción de ganancia de calor, (Bevilacqua et al., 2015; Snell, 2009) o a la mayor presencia de nubes (Getter et al., 2011). Estos resultados contrastan con otros estudios que sugieren un ahorro energético respecto a otras técnicas pasivas de regulación térmica. Así mismo se obtuvieron mejores resultados en ciudades con inviernos suaves, lo que sugiere la importancia de las condiciones ambientales externas, en especial en periodos en los que la energía es utilizada para calefacción (Ascione et al., 2013; Costanzo et al., 2016).

Los estudios experimentales y simulaciones han sido aplicados en diferentes climatologías y estaciones del año a fin de estimar su influencia sobre el efecto de regulación térmica, confirmando variaciones y dejando en claro que el riego, el mantenimiento y la climatología juegan un rol importante en el desarrollo de la vegetación, y repercuten en la eficiencia de la regulación térmica que pretenden alcanzar las cubiertas vegetadas (Getter et al., 2011; Lin et al., 2013; Lundholm et al., 2010; Theodosiou, 2003).

Disminución del efecto de isla de calor

Los efectos de isla de calor en las ciudades se manifiestan principalmente en el incremento de temperatura ambiental producido, entre otros, por la absorción de energía por parte de superficies duras e infraestructuras urbanas, por lo que las cubiertas ajardinadas mitigarían este impacto, mejorando el confort térmico de la población en las ciudades y el microclima a nivel local (Peng and Jim, 2013).

El rol de las cubiertas ajardinadas en el balance de energía mencionado anteriormente genera una reducción del calor absorbido directamente por las superficies e incrementa la energía absorbida por los procesos biológicos de la planta, lo que conlleva un aumento de radiación reflejada o albedo. El albedo de una superficie con vegetación puede llegar a 0.7- 0.85 (Vijayaraghavan, 2016), siendo éste más alto que el albedo de una superficie oscura (asfalto o techados convencionales) que llega a 0.1 a 0,3 (Kolokotsa et al., 2013). El albedo es inversamente proporcional al flujo de calor sensible del sistema, por ende su aumento implica la reducción del índice de Bowen (relación entre calor sensible y calor latente) (Oberndorfer et al., 2007). En una cubierta ajardinada, se han calculado reducciones de calor sensible del 42% al 75% con respecto a una cubierta convencional (Costanzo et al., 2016), coherentemente en cubiertas vegetadas se han reportado valores de flujo de calor sensible entre 40 y 60 W/m², mientras que en un tejado convencional con 0.3 de albedo se reportan 70 W/m² (Kolokotsa et al., 2013). Este beneficio continúa siendo debatido pues otros resultados atribuyen a las cubiertas vegetadas sólo un 5% de incremento de calor latente (Schweitzer, 2014). Este fenómeno genera también una disminución de la temperatura del aire sobre la superficie de la infraestructura (Akbari and Konopacki, 2005; Jarrett et al., 2007), habiéndose reportado reducciones de temperatura superficial entre 0.3 y 3 °C (Santamouris, 2014). El rango de variación en la reducción de flujo de calor sensible a consecuencia de la presencia de una cubierta vegetada está influenciado por varios factores, entre los que destacarían la radiación, la temperatura y el comportamiento del viento, así como las características de la vegetación y el coeficiente de transmisión térmica del sistema de cubierta (Santamouris, 2014).

Capacidad de retención de agua

Este servicio ecosistémico, relacionado con la mejora en el manejo del agua de lluvia, se logra a través de la reducción de la cantidad de agua perdida por escorrentía y del retraso de su flujo por el sistema urbano de colección de agua (Fioretti et al., 2010). Las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas pueden alcanzar hasta el 45% de reducción de agua (Mentens, 2006), sin embargo los porcentajes varían en relación al tipo de evaluación (simulaciones o monitoreos

experimentales), así como en relación con las características del sistema: profundidad del sustrato, la presencia y características estructurales de la de vegetación (Dunnet, 2007; Farell, 2013), destacándose también la influencia del volumen y de la intensidad de la precipitación (Schroll et al., 2011; Vijayaraghavan, 2016; Volder and Dvorak, 2014). Estudios en la región Mediterránea reportaron medias anuales de reducción del volumen de escorrentía total que oscilan entre el 23 y el 68%, y calculan un retraso del flujo de escorrentía de hasta 306 minutos, periodo que varía de manera significativa a lo largo del año con una media anual de 165 minutos (Fioretti et al., 2010).

Capacidad de secuestro de carbono

Las actividades en áreas urbanas afectan de manera importante a las dinámicas del balance de carbono (Grimm et al., 2015; Whittinghill et al., 2014). Diferentes estudios se han enfocado en cuantificar la capacidad de secuestro de carbono de las cubiertas ajardinadas, evidenciando su potencial (Bianchini and Hewage, 2012a; Getter et al., 2009; Li et al., 2010).

Según los resultados publicados, el sistema completo de cubierta ajardinada llega a secuestrar en dos años 375 gC por m² (Getter et al., 2009), sin embargo, como es el caso de otros servicios ecosistémicos, esta cifra puede variar en función del tipo de vegetación y de las características del emplazamiento de la cubierta. Así, por ejemplo, cubiertas vegetadas con especies del género *Sedum* fijaron 3.49 kg de C/m² en la biomasa aérea, 0.47 kg de C/m² en la biomasa radicular y 3.22 kg de C/m² en el sustrato (Whittinghill et al., 2014). Resultó además evidente que las cubiertas ajardinadas, al margen de las especies seleccionadas para su implementación, fijan menor cantidad de carbono que zonas ajardinadas al nivel del suelo, estas diferencias resultan principalmente de las dificultades que enfrenta la vegetación para incrementar su área de cobertura en las condiciones de las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas.

La fijación de carbono en sistemas de cubierta ajardinada evidentemente está relacionada con la actividad fotosintética y la producción de biomasa de las especies, en cuanto a esta relación se plantea que una mayor actividad fotosintética y una mayor producción de biomasa fomentaría también la reducción de contaminantes (Agra, 2017).

Las diferentes políticas ambientales que contemplan créditos por secuestro de carbono alientan la implantación de cubiertas ajardinadas en países como Austria, Alemania, Japón e Inglaterra (Clark, 2008), entre otros. No obstante, es importante recalcar que para la cuantificación real de los alcances de las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas como sumideros de CO₂ se debe incluir la cuantificación de los costos de carbono que implica la fabricación de los diferentes componentes de su sistema y los derivados de su mantenimiento, además de los componentes de cubierta convencional que se incluyen igualmente, así como restarle la cantidad de CO₂ que se ahorra disminuyendo el gasto energético en aire acondicionado y calefacción que se daría a consecuencia de la capacidad de aislamiento de las cubiertas ajardinadas. Estos elementos hacen aún más compleja la cuantificación de este servicio ecosistémico (Bianchini and Hewage, 2012a; Whittinghill et al., 2014).

Incremento del valor estético

En términos generales se asume que las infraestructuras verdes mejoran la apariencia visual y estética de las áreas urbanas (Bendell et al, 2010; Fernández-Cañero et al., 2013), en especial en las ciudades donde los paisajes son monótonos y las infraestructuras poco atractivas, la contribución estética de las áreas verdes es altamente reconocida (Yuen and Hien, 2005)

El incremento del valor estético de una ciudad además de ser un beneficio ambiental en sí mismo, involucra una serie de beneficios sociales, psicológicos y económicos, estando entre ellos el bienestar y los mejores rendimientos laborales de sus habitantes, lo que repercute en el estado de salud emocional y físico de los mismos (Raji et al., 2015; White and Gatersleben, 2011)

Las percepciones del valor estético de una cubierta ajardinada pueden variar en cuanto a las preferencias por “lo natural” versus “lo intervenido”, “lo ordenado” versus “lo desordenado”, la presencia o la ausencia de flores, el predominio de verde o la presencia de otros colores como rojo, amarillo u otras tonalidades (Özgüner and Kendle, 2006; White and Gatersleben, 2011; Yuen and Hien, 2005).

Incremento del valor económico de las propiedades

A consecuencia de la instalación de cubiertas con vegetación, el valor económico de la infraestructura que las alberga puede incrementar, lo que se debe principalmente a: i) la cercanía o la incorporación de un área verde (Minke, 1992), ii) la mayor duración de las cubiertas de los edificios (Liptan, 2010), y iii) por el ahorro del gasto de energía derivado de la capacidad de aislamiento térmico (Bianchini and Hewage, 2012b; Retzlaff et al., 2010). Estos elementos han permitido una relación de costo/beneficio positiva que justifica la inversión en este tipo de infraestructura, en especial cuando se consideran los beneficios públicos (Bianchini and Hewage, 2012b; Liptan, 2010; Nurmi et al., 2013).

Otros beneficios

Aunque menos reconocidos, otros servicios ambientales que proveen las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas han sido estudiados (Fernández-Cañero et al., 2013), entre ellos destacan: el aprovechamiento y recuperación de espacios para la biodiversidad en áreas urbanas, la reducción de la contaminación acústica en el interior de las infraestructuras y la mejora de la calidad del agua de escorrentía en las ciudades (Veisten et al., 2012 ; Vijayaraghavan et al., 2012). Se ha estudiado también la mitigación de la contaminación ambiental en términos de reducción de contaminantes atmosféricos, que pasa por la reducción de niveles de CO₂ de la atmósfera (Agra et al., 2017; Li et al., 2010; Getter and Rowe, 2006; Vijayaraghavan et al., 2012). Los resultados sugieren que el alcance de las cubiertas vegetadas en cuanto a la reducción de la contaminación atmosférica, es bastante limitado (Miguel and Monteagudo, 2012) -2% de reducción en la concentración de CO₂ de la atmósfera) (Li et al., 2010)-. Por tanto, resulta difícil justificar la implementación de cubiertas vegetadas basándose solo en este beneficio o en otro determinado (Miguel and Monteagudo, 2012; Schweitzer and Erell, 2014).

Los estudios realizados coinciden en que la cuantificación de estos beneficios merece mayor atención y que ésta debe ser realizada de manera explícita para cada uno de los proyectos, de sus ecosistemas y condiciones en las que se implementen las cubiertas vegetadas.

1.5 Estado del arte y marco normativo

La necesidad de encontrar una solución que permita mejorar la situación del importante y acelerado impacto ambiental que se ha dado a nivel global desde la década de los 1960s, ha generado una preocupación ambiental que ha ido acrecentándose desde 1970 hasta el día de hoy (Grimm et al., 2015; Özgüner and Kendle, 2006; Power, 2001). Las cubiertas ajardinadas surgieron y se popularizaron en Alemania desde finales del siglo XIX, y fueron rápidamente aceptadas por los países nórdicos. Actualmente, se han difundido por varios países europeos, Estados Unidos, Canadá, Australia y diversos países de clima tropical y subtropical.

Normativa

Alemania ha introducido con anterioridad programas que promueven esta tecnología, apoyándola con la creación de legislación marco. En este país, la superficie de infraestructura cubierta por vegetación llega aproximadamente a 13.5 millones de m² por año (Oberndorfer et al., 2007). A nivel reglamentario están las políticas que promueven específicamente la implementación de cubiertas ajardinadas. Actualmente son varias las ciudades que se han sumado a la instauración de reglamentación y estrategias de promoción. A continuación, se citan algunos ejemplos de normativas de control para la implantación de cubiertas ajardinadas en el mundo. En la Tabla 1.1 se detallan ejemplos normativos considerados por Clark (2008), incluyendo algunas modificaciones y actualizaciones.

Asociaciones y organizaciones

A nivel organizacional están las asociaciones, organizaciones sin fines de lucro y redes constituidas de carácter nacional e internacional que llevan a cabo la promoción y difusión de los temas relacionados con las cubiertas ajardinadas, siendo sus tareas predominantemente divulgativas y formativas. Como ejemplos se puede mencionar a: The Internacional Green Roof Association (IRGA), the World Green Infrastructure Net Work (WGINW), European Federation of Green

Roof and Wall Associations (EFB) y la Green Roofs for Healthy Cities in North America (GRHC).

En España, se ha constituido la Asociación Española de Cubiertas ajardinadas y Ajardinamiento Verticales (ASECUVE) con la misión de promover esta tecnología, sin embargo, al igual que las organizaciones de promoción internacional mencionadas no tiene un alcance normativo.

El marco legal relacionado con la implantación de cubiertas ajardinadas en España está circunscrito al Código Técnico de Edificación (CTE) y a la Ley 8/2013, de 26 de junio de rehabilitación, regeneración y renovación urbanas. Ésta última incluye disposiciones relacionadas con el cumplimiento de la legislación ambiental vigente y el ahorro energético de los edificios (BOE, 2013; Ministerio de vivienda, 2006).

Tabla 1.1. Ejemplos de normativa a nivel mundial.

| <i>País ciudad / Normativa</i> | <i>Año</i> | <i>Descripción</i> |
|---|--------------|---|
| Linz, Austria The green space plan | 1985 2001 | Instaura el requerimiento de cubiertas ajardinadas en los nuevos planes de construcción. Especificando algunas particularidades para su implementación, área de superficie, porcentaje de cobertura verde, profundidad y origen del sustrato |
| Sheffield, Inglaterra Green roofs | 2007 | Las construcciones medianas y grandes (mayores a 1000 m ²) requieren implementar un tejado verde cubriendo al menos el 80% del área de cubierta total. |
| Berlín Alemania Biotope área factor (BFA) | 2006 | Es una reglamentación válida para 13 áreas en Berlín fuera de las cuales el cumplimiento es voluntario. Este factor promueve un equilibrio correcto entre la superficie de área construida y la superficie ecológicamente efectiva. |
| Osaka Japón System Greening in Sites of a Building | 2006 | Requiere la implementación de vegetación sobre la cubierta para superficies mayores a 1000 m ² . |
| Tokyo Japón Regulation on Protection and recovery of the Nature in Tokyo | 2001 | Requiere la implementación de vegetación sobre el 20% de la cubierta de nuevos edificios para superficies mayores a 1000 m ² . |
| Busan Corea del Sur Regulation on Promotion and Support of the Green Roof and Construction | 2004 | Requiere la implementación de vegetación sobre el 20% de la cubierta de nuevos edificios para superficies mayores a 1000 m ² . |
| Suiza Federal Law of Switzerland | 2006 | Requiere la implementación de vegetación sobre el 20% de la cubierta de nuevos edificios, enfocándose en la conservación del hábitat y protección de especies en peligro. |
| Seattle, Estados Unidos Green factor | 2007 | Requiere la implementación de vegetación sobre el 20% de la cubierta de nuevos edificios promoviendo las áreas de cultivo. |
| Chicago, Estados Unidos Green roofs | 2012 | Otorga incentivos a la implementación de cubiertas vegetadas y facilita los programas vinculados. |
| Toronto, Canadá Eco-roof initiative program. The Green Roof Bylaw4 | 2010 | Define los requerimientos de las cubiertas vegetadas en los edificios nuevos con especificaciones de coberturas y vegetación. |
| Arlington County, Virginia, EEUU Density Incentive Program | 1999 2003 | El plan otorga mayores espacios de construcción a los edificios que limiten su consumo energético a través de la implementación de técnicas como las cubiertas vegetadas. |
| King County, Washington, EEUU County's Green Tools Program t- Green Building and Sustainable | 1993 2007 | El programa incorpora estrategias exitosas de construcción con área verde. Promueve la educación, la capacitación, y el entrenamiento. |
| New York State, Estados Unidos Incentivos fiscales e impositivos | 2013 | La ley otorga un crédito del impuesto para las construcciones que cubran el 50% de su superficie de área verde. |

1.6 Percepción social de las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas

La implementación de las cubiertas ajardinadas como una práctica con connotaciones ambientales depende en gran parte de la aceptación y de las percepciones de los usuarios finales. Así como esta práctica ha sido bien acogida y rápidamente normada y aplicada en países norteamericanos y nórdicos, en la región Mediterránea su progreso ha sido lento (Fernández-Cañero et al., 2013; Vijayaraghavan, 2016). En esta región, se han llevado a cabo estudios sobre la percepción de los residentes respecto a la implantación de infraestructuras verdes en general (Lafortezza et al., 2009; Priego et al., 2008) y sistemas de cubierta ajardinada en particular (Fernández-Cañero et al., 2013). Los resultados obtenidos sugieren la influencia de las características demográficas, económicas y el nivel de educación sobre la percepción de una población respecto a determinadas prácticas o actitudes, y aportan información útil para identificar aquellos beneficios relacionados con la implementación de cubiertas ajardinadas mejor valorados (Fernandez-Cañero et al., 2013; Jungels et al., 2013; Özgüner and Kendle, 2006; White and Gatersleben, 2011). La exploración de la predisposición o preferencia respecto a una determinada actitud o práctica puede constituir un indicio de los esfuerzos que un individuo está dispuesto a realizar para adoptar esta práctica o actitud (Bestard and Nadal, 2007), por lo que estudiar la percepción de las cubiertas ajardinadas y su conveniencia ambiental podría brindar información sustancial para diseñar políticas de incentivo o promoción de esta tecnología, en especial a nivel local.

OBJETIVOS

2.1 Objetivo General

A partir de lo expuesto anteriormente, la presente tesis se plantea como **hipótesis** que las características que han permitido a algunas especies nativas adaptarse a las condiciones ambientales Mediterráneas estresantes, les permitiría responder adecuadamente en condiciones de cubierta ajardinada extensiva caracterizada por condiciones ambientales similares a las que predominan en sus hábitats naturales, como son el estrés hídrico, la incidencia elevada de viento y radiación y la baja disponibilidad de nutrientes.

Considerando, por un lado, que la importancia otorgada a las cubiertas ajardinadas como objeto de estudio radica en la sinergia de los servicios ecosistémicos que brinda y sus connotaciones socioeconómicas y, por el otro, que la selección de especies a implementar determina de manera importante la eficiencia de la funcionalidad ambiental de las cubiertas vegetales, se plantea como objetivo general de la presente tesis:

La evaluación de especies nativas de la cuenca Mediterránea potencialmente útiles en la implementación de cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas y de las funcionalidades ambientales que éstas impulsan

2.2 Objetivos Específicos

Capítulo I

1. Evaluar la potencial adecuación de 6 especies nativas del Mediterráneo para la implementación de cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas en condiciones de déficit hídrico moderado y severo, determinando el efecto de la disponibilidad de agua en condiciones controladas sobre su crecimiento, consumo de agua y valor estético.

Capítulo II

2. Evaluar el potencial de adecuación de 5 especies nativas del Mediterráneo bajo dos regímenes de riego en condiciones de cubierta ajardinada extensiva a largo plazo, cuantificando el efecto del riego

limitado en su crecimiento, apariencia y coloración en relación a su valor estético y su capacidad de cobertura en las diferentes estaciones del año.

3. Evaluar 5 especies nativas del Mediterráneo bajo dos regímenes de riego en condiciones de cubierta ajardinada extensiva a largo plazo, cuantificando su crecimiento, producción de biomasa, apariencia y coloración en relación a sus requerimientos de mantenimiento y su capacidad de secuestro de carbono.
4. Evaluar 5 especies nativas del Mediterráneo bajo dos diferentes regímenes de riego en condiciones de cubierta ajardinada extensiva a largo plazo, cuantificando su consumo hídrico con el fin de estimar su uso potencial en la gestión del agua de escorrentía.

Capítulo III

5. Cuantificar la contribución de la presencia de vegetación en la capacidad de regulación térmica del sistema de cubierta ajardinada extensiva y sus variaciones estacionales.
6. Evaluar la influencia de diferentes tipos de planta y de su arquitectura en la capacidad de regulación térmica del sistema de cubierta ajardinada extensiva y sus variaciones estacionales.
7. Evaluar la influencia de dos tratamientos de riego en la capacidad de regulación térmica del sistema de cubierta ajardinada extensiva y sus variaciones estacionales.

Capítulo III

MATERIALES Y MÉTODOS

Este Capítulo describe de forma general la metodología y los materiales utilizados en la experimentación que ha conllevado este estudio para la consecución de los objetivos planteados. En cada uno de los tres capítulos que componen el corpus experimental de la presente tesis, se especificarán más extensamente los detalles de cada experimento.

3.1 Diseños experimentales

Los capítulos desarrollados se relacionan directamente con el estudio y la evaluación de las especies nativas del Mediterráneo, su implementación en las cubiertas ajardinadas y su funcionalidad ambiental, para lo que se han desarrollado 3 experimentos distintos cuyas características principales se detallan a continuación:

Capítulo IV - Experimento 1

Evaluación de 6 especies nativas con plantas crecidas en macetas individuales. Se aplicaron 3 tratamientos de riego manual desarrollado en un periodo estival de 88 días de duración (6 de mayo 2103 a 2 agosto 2013) (Fig. 3.1).

- 126 macetas
- 18 macetas por especie
- 18 macetas sin planta (para la estimación de la evapotranspiración del sustrato en maceta)
- 3 tratamientos de riego
- 6 réplicas por tratamiento

Capítulo V - Experimento 2

Evaluación de 5 especies en módulos metálicos experimentales que simularon condiciones reales de cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas. Se aplicaron 2 tratamientos de riego por goteo y se realizó un seguimiento durante 717 días de duración (27 Junio 2013 a 14 Junio 2015) (Fig. 3.2).

- 36 módulos experimentales

- 3 módulos experimentales por especie y tratamiento
- 6 módulos experimentales sin planta (estimación de la evapotranspiración y uso de agua y capacidad de retención de agua en sustrato sin planta)
- 2 tratamientos de riego

Capítulo VI - Experimento 3

Evaluación de 2 especies en módulos metálicos experimentales que simularon condiciones reales de cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas con plantas con 15 meses de crecimiento. Se aplicaron 2 tratamientos de riego por goteo, experimento de seguimiento anual- 365 días (Marzo 2014 a Marzo 2015). (Fig. 3.2)

- 6 módulos experimentales
- 2 módulos experimentales por especie
- 2 módulos experimentales sin planta (estimación de la regulación térmica sin vegetación)
- 2 tratamientos de riego



Figura 3.1 Macetas -Experimento 1

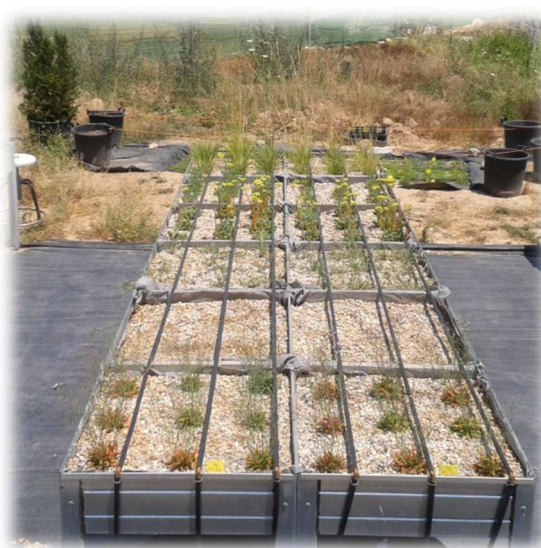


Figura 3.2 Módulos experimentales - Experimentos 2 y 3

Considerando las mencionadas diferencias, se plantea la descripción de la metodología en secciones diferenciándola según el experimento en el cual se ha aplicado. Así mismo, para facilitar la lectura y comprensión cada uno de los capítulos incluye los detalles o especificaciones correspondientes.

3.2 Material vegetal

Las semillas y los propágulos de 25 especies nativas del Mediterráneo fueron colectadas en los diferentes hábitats naturales distribuidos en Mallorca (Islas Baleares) (Tabla 3.1). Se consideraron hábitats con condiciones ambientales extremas comparables a las condiciones de las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas (sustrato poco profundo o con baja capacidad de almacenar agua y pobre en materia orgánica, alta radiación y altas temperaturas). Las semillas y los propágulos fueron sembradas o dispuestos en bandejas semillero con sustrato universal hortícola (Prohumin Sustrato Klasmann - Deilmann, Comercial Projar S.A., Valencia, España) en invernadero, llevándose a cabo una evaluación cuantitativa y cualitativa de su emergencia y sobrevivencia. A partir de esta evaluación de la facilidad de propagación en condiciones de vivero y de un análisis detallado de las características productivas y estéticas, se seleccionaron 6 especies: *Brachypodium phoenicoides*, *Crithmum maritimum*, *Limonium virgatum*, *Sedum sediforme* y *Sporobolus pungens*, las especies seleccionadas cumplen los siguientes criterios: perennialidad (incluyendo la capacidad para mantener verde la parte aérea durante todo el año), baja producción de biomasa, potencial estético, facilidad de reproducción en condiciones de invernadero (porcentajes de emergencia mayores al 50% y adecuado crecimiento) (Tabla 3).

Tabla 3.1. Lista inicial de especies nativas colectadas.

| Género Especie | Familia | Forma de vida | Energencia | Hábitat natural |
|--|----------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Agropyrum junceum</i> (L.) Beauv. | Poaceae | Geófito | <50% ^a | Arenales de litoral |
| <i>Asteriscus maritimus</i> L. Less. | Compositae | Caméfito | >60% ^{a*} | Dunas, acantilados y zonas costeras |
| <i>Braquipodium phenicoides</i> (L.) Roem. Et schultes | Poaceae | Hemicriptofito | >80% ^{a*} | Praderas marginales, cultivos y pinares |
| <i>Braquipodium retusum</i> (pers.) Beauv. | Poaceae | Caméfito | >70% ^{a*} | Praderas marginales, cultivos y pinares |
| <i>Cakile maritima scop</i> | Cruciferae | Terófito | <5% ^{a*} | Dunas y Zonas costeras |
| <i>Clematis flamula</i> L. | Ranunculaceae | Fanerófito | <50% ^{a*} | Zarzales, muros, bosques clareados y dunas |
| <i>Crithmum maritimum</i> L. | Umbelliferae | Caméfito | >70% ^a | Zonas de litoral |
| <i>Eryngium maritimum</i> L. | Umbelliferae | Geófito | <5% ^{a*} | Dunas |
| <i>Euphorbiaparalias</i> L. | Euphorbiaceae | Caméfito | <30% | Arenales de litoral |
| <i>Fagonia cretica</i> L. | Zigophillaceae | Caméfito | <5% ^{a*} | Litorales rocosos y áridos |
| <i>Helicrysum stoechas</i> (L.) Moench | Compositae | Caméfito | <10% ^{a*} | Campos arenosos del litoral, comunidades ruderales costeras |
| <i>Hippocrepis balearica</i> | Leguminosae | Nanofanerófito | <5% ^a | Peñascos, rocas (Zona montañosa) |
| <i>Limonium biflorum (pignatti) pignatti</i> | Plumbaginaceae | Caméfito | <50% ^a | Dunas y zonas costeras |
| <i>Limonium minutum</i> (L.) Chaz. | Plumbaginaceae | Caméfito | <10% ^a | Dunas, acantilados y zonas costeras |
| <i>Limonium virgatum</i> (Willd.) Fourr | Plumbaginaceae | Caméfito | >70% ^a | Suelos salobres del litoral. |
| <i>Matthiola sinuata</i> (L.) R.br. | Cruciferae | Hemicritófito | >80% ^a | Dunas y Zonas costeras |
| <i>Pancratium maritimum</i> | Amarillidaceae | Geófito | >60% ^a | Arenales marítimos y dunas |
| <i>Sacaviosa cretica</i> L. | Dipsacaceae | Caméfito | <5% ^a | Peñascos, rocas (Zona montañosa) y litoral |
| <i>Salsola kali</i> L. Subsp. <i>Ruthenica</i> (iljin) | Chenopodiaceae | Terófito | <5% ^a | Campos arenosos del litoral, comunidades ruderales costeras |
| <i>Sedum rubens</i> | Crasulaceae | Terófito | <50% ^{a*} ->80% ^b | Tejados, muros, peñascos, rocas (Zona montañosa) |
| <i>Sedum sediforme</i> (jacq.) Pau | Crasulaceae | Caméfito | <20% ^{a*} ->80% ^b | Tejados, muros, peñascos, rocas (Zona montañosa) |
| <i>Sporobolus pungens</i> (schreber) kunth | Poaceae | Geófito | <5% ^{a*} ->80% ^b | Arenales de litoral |
| <i>Teucrium capitatum</i> L. | Libiateae | Caméfito | <5% ^a | Praderas marginales, cultivos, pinares y zonas litorales |
| <i>Umbilicus gaditanus</i> boiss. | Crasulaceae | Hemicritófito | >50% ^a | Muros, peñascos, rocas (Zona montañosa) |

Tabla 3.2. Lista de especies utilizadas para la experimentación

| | | |
|---|---|------------------------------|
|  | <p><i>Asteriscus maritimus</i> (L.) Less. Arbusto pequeño y redondeado, flores con lígulas desarrolladas. Colecta de semilla: Julio a Noviembre.</p> | <p>Experimento 1</p> |
|  | <p><i>Brachypodium phoenicoides</i> (L.) Roem. et Schultes Gramínea perenne de hojas alargadas con venas prominentes y concentradas en la base. Distribuida en el Oeste Europeo y zona mediterránea. Colecta de semilla: Julio y Agosto.</p> | <p>Experimentos 1, 2 y 3</p> |
|  | <p><i>Crithmum maritimum</i> L. Leñosa con hojas suculentas divididas en segmentos, color verde glauco y aroma bien característico, flores de un color amarillo-verdoso que forman umbelas con largos pedúnculos. Colecta de semilla: Septiembre - Octubre.</p> | <p>Experimentos 1 y 2</p> |
|  | <p><i>Limonium virgatum</i> (Willd.) Fourr Planta de tronco corto con hojas lineares más anchas en la parte superior que adquieren coloraciones rojizas. Colecta de semilla: Septiembre a Noviembre.</p> | <p>Experimentos 1 y 2</p> |
|  | <p><i>Sporobolus pungens</i> (Schreber) Kunth Planta con hojas rígidas y dispuestas lado a lado. Inflorescencia corta en la parte superior de los tallos Colecta de semilla: Julio. Colecta de estolones y rizomas: Junio-Septiembre.</p> | <p>Experimentos 1 y 2</p> |
|  | <p><i>Sedum sediforme</i> (Jacq.) Pau La planta tiene la base del tallo lignificada, las hojas son carnosas y puntiagudas. Las flores son de color amarillo formadas sobre un tallo fértil y se abre varias ramas. Colecta de semilla: Agosto - Octubre Colecta de propágulos: Julio - Octubre</p> | <p>Experimentos 1, 2 y 3</p> |

3.3 Tratamientos de riego

Experimento 1

El peso de las macetas a capacidad de campo se determinó a partir del método gravimétrico (determinando el peso de las macetas bien regadas después de 8 horas de drenaje), con este dato y el peso de las macetas plásticas vacías fue posible determinar el peso del agua en la maceta a 100 % de su capacidad de campo dado que se calculó previamente la capacidad de campo del sustrato utilizado (27,9 %). El riego se distribuyó en tres periodos: i) los primeros 28 días se aplicó riego a capacidad de campo a todas las macetas, ii) los siguientes 12 días, 12 macetas por especie se regaron restableciendo a cada maceta el 70 % de agua consumida a fin de alcanzar de manera progresiva el 75 % y el 50 % del agua contenida en la maceta a capacidad de campo, iii) los últimos 48 días del experimento se mantuvieron 6 macetas a 100 % de capacidad de campo, 6 macetas a 75 % de capacidad de campo (sequía moderada) y 6 macetas a 50 % de capacidad de campo (sequía severa) en cada especie. Se aplicó el mismo método de riego con la misma periodicidad a 18 macetas sin planta a fin de determinar la evaporación directa del sustrato utilizado.

Experimentos 2 y 3

Se aplicaron dos tratamientos de riego determinados a partir del cálculo del requerimiento hídrico del sistema. Según Costello et al. (2000), el requerimiento de un sistema de jardín ($k_{\text{jardín}}$) se calcula considerando: la evapotranspiración potencial (ET_0), el factor microclimático, la densidad y el requerimiento de las especies presentes en el jardín (Eq 1.1). En este sentido, dado un microclima común para el sistema y similar al que caracteriza la ubicación de las cabinas meteorológicas se consideró el coeficiente microclimático ($k_{\text{microclima}}$) igual a 1. El coeficiente de densidad (k_{densidad}) también se considerará igual a 1, dado que la densidad de siembra pretendió cubrir el 100% de la superficie del módulo. El coeficiente especie (K_s) se calculó como la media de los coeficientes de riego de las diferentes especies involucradas, estimándose en 0,5: K_s herbáceas (0,6 a 0,7), K_s crasas: 0,3 (Costello et al., 2000).

A partir de estos cálculos, en los experimentos desarrollados los tratamientos aplicados fueron: riego del 100% del requerimiento hídrico (50% ET₀) y riego limitado, 50% del requerimiento hídrico (25% ET₀).

$$k_{jardín} = \frac{ET_R}{ET_0} \quad \text{Eq 1.1}$$

Donde $k_{jardín} = k_s * k_{microclima} * k_{densidad}$; y $k_s = (k_{herbáceas} * k_{crasas}) / 2$

3.4 Cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas: metodología y medidas

Para el desarrollo de los experimentos, se ha considerado el sistema de cubierta ajardinada extensiva, haciendo uso de los componentes disponibles a nivel comercial en la región. Así en los 3 experimentos se ha utilizado el sustrato comercial empleado en sistemas de cubierta extensiva; y en el experimento 2 y 3, además del mismo sustrato comercial, se ha utilizado un filtro anti raíces, un sistema de drenaje y una manta protectora comercial (Zin Co-Net Work, 2012), cuyos detalles se especifican en la Tabla 3.3 y Fig. 3.3. Las propiedades físicoquímicas del suelo al inicio de los experimentos se recogen en la tabla 3.4.

Tabla 3.3 Componentes estructurales del sistema de cubierta ajardinada extensiva utilizados en la instalación de los módulos experimentales.

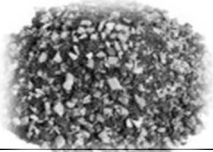
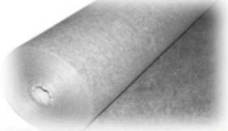


| | |
|---|--|
|  | Sustrato organomineral Fabricado de cerámica reciclada, 10.7% de materia orgánica Capacidad de campo: 27.9% |
|  | Lamina de filtro Geoextil de polipropileno |
|  | Sistema de drenaje Poliefim reciclado |
|  | Manta de protección y retenerdora de agua. Fibra sintética de poliéster reciclada Capacidad de campo: 5 L/m ² |



Figura 3.3. Instalación de los módulos experimentales con los componentes comerciales del sistema de cubierta ajardinada Empresa proveedora: Proyectos paisajísticos Baleares S.L.PPB, Mallorca España.

Tabla 3.4 Resultados de los parámetros físicoquímicos del suelo organomineral Zinco. Métodos oficiales de análisis Tomo III (MAPA, 1994)

| Parámetros físicoquímicos iniciales | |
|---|--------|
| Contenido orgánico (%) | 10.66 |
| Capacidad de intercambio cationico (meq/100g) | 20.55 |
| Carbonatos (%) | 28.68 |
| Ph | 7.66 |
| Conductividad (ds/m, 25°C) | 1.26 |
| N total (%) | 0.46 |
| Ratio C/N | 13.44 |
| P (ppm) | 115.43 |
| K (ppm) | 937.00 |
| Ca (meq/100g) | 20.92 |
| Na (ppm) | 272.83 |
| Porcentaje de Sodio intercambiablePSI (%) | 4.75 |
| Calcárea activa (%) | 3.79 |

Cobertura de planta, coloración y biomasa

Para la cuantificación de la cobertura, se tomaron y analizaron imágenes digitales. La captura de 2 imágenes por área (macetas y módulos experimentales) en todos los casos se realizó en las mismas condiciones. Las imágenes fueron capturadas en el horario considerado como mediodía solar (de 11:00 a 15:00 horas, dependiendo de la estación del año) y en posición perpendicular a un metro por encima del área a analizar, así mismo todas las imágenes de un mismo día fueron tomadas en un lapso máximo de 30 minutos. Las imágenes (formato JPG) fueron analizadas utilizando un programa informático de análisis digital de imágenes (Greenpix, desarrollado por el Institut de Recerca i Tecnologia Agroalimentàries de Catalunya-IRTA). Las imágenes, previo análisis, se ajustaron utilizando el mismo programa, que se caracteriza por permitir la cuantificación de píxeles diferenciando el matiz de color que le corresponden, agrupándolos según la longitud de onda que corresponde a su tonalidad (Vestrella et al., 2015).

Así se cuantificó la cobertura, diferenciando en el experimento 2 el área cubierta por tonalidades verdes, amarillas y marrones. Según la longitud de onda correspondiente a cada coloración se consideraron 3 rangos: 5-30 para las tonalidades rojizas-marrones, 40-70 para las tonalidades amarillas y 70-180 para las tonalidades verdes (Figs. 3.4, 3.5 y 3.6).

A diferencia de otros sustratos, el sustrato utilizado no se excluye automáticamente de la cuantificación de área cubierta debido a su tonalidad, siendo necesario excluir los píxeles entre los valores 30 y 40 (Fig. 3.7) como manera de evitar una superposición de áreas y errores de cálculo.

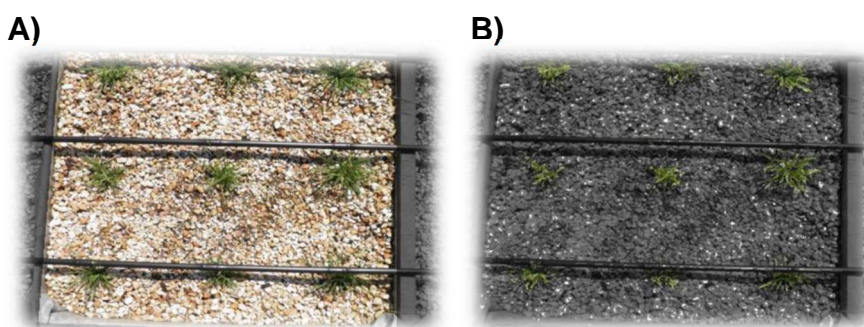


Figura 3.4. A) Selección de área de medida, B) selección de tonalidades verdes, píxeles correspondientes al rango 70-150.

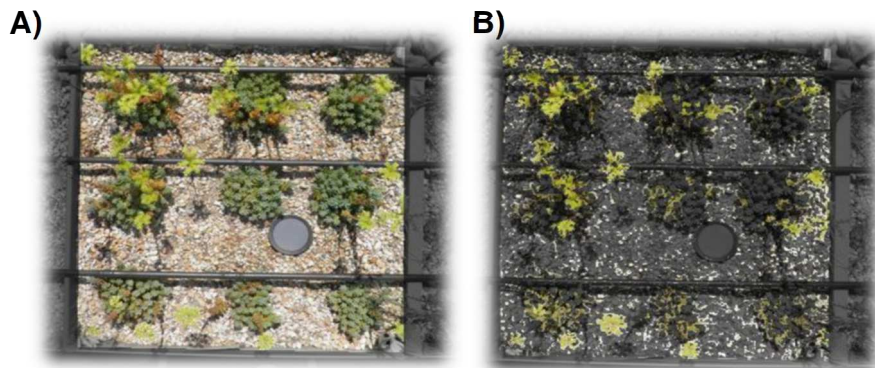


Figura 3.5. A) Selección de área de medida, B) selección de tonalidades amarillas, pixeles correspondientes al rango 40-70.

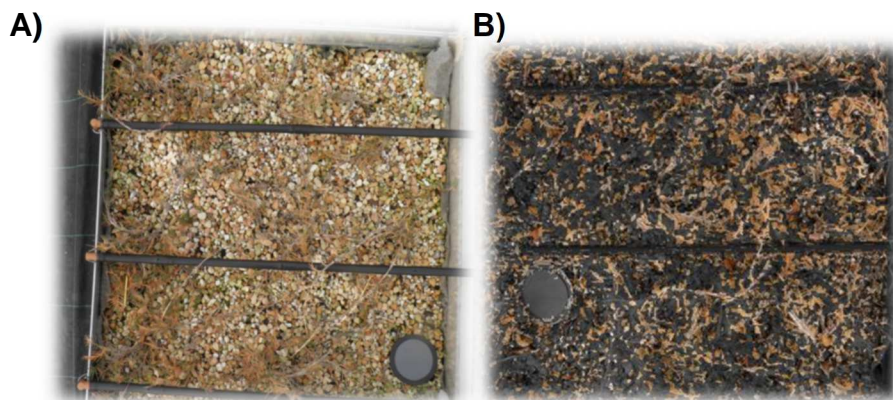


Figura 3.6. A) Selección de área de medida, B) selección de tonalidades rojizas marrones, pixeles correspondientes al rango 0-30.

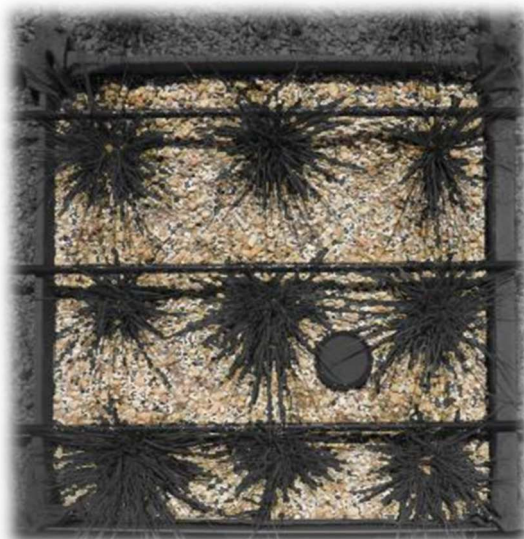


Figura 3.7 Selección de tonalidades correspondientes a la coloración del sustrato, pixeles del rango 30-40.

Para la valoración estética de la vegetación se desarrolló una metodología adaptando procedimientos previamente utilizados. La metodología desarrollada se basa en la valoración de 4 parámetros estéticos: color, forma, vigor y floración. Las medidas de cobertura de área y valoración estética se realizaron semanalmente en el experimento 1 y mensualmente en el experimento 2.

La biomasa producida a lo largo de la experimentación se cuantificó diferenciando biomasa aérea y biomasa radicular. En el caso de la biomasa radicular, ésta se obtuvo separando manualmente la raíz del sustrato, las raíces se lavaron y el agua residual se pasó por un tamiz para recuperar cualquier resto de biomasa. La biomasa aérea se separó en tallos, hojas y flores y se obtuvo colectando y pesando la biomasa seca a 70 °C (72 horas de periodo de secado). En el experimento 1, se cuantificó la biomasa diferenciando la biomasa de tallo, la biomasa foliar y la biomasa de las flores. Así mismo se cuantificó la biomasa senescente producida a lo largo del experimento separando las hojas muertas. También en el experimento 1, se cuantificó el área foliar total a partir de una muestra representativa de hojas (mismo número de hojas, entre 20 y 25 hojas por planta de diferentes tamaños), el tamaño de muestra fue proporcionalmente igual para cada planta dependiendo de la cantidad total de hojas producidas por cada una. El área foliar se midió utilizando imágenes digitales de las hojas y el programa Image J (Programa de dominio público desarrollado por U.S. National Institutes of Health disponible en red: <http://rsb.info.nih.gov/nih-image/>). A partir del área foliar de la alícuota y de su peso seco se cuantificó el área específica foliar (m^2/kg de hoja) y el área relativa de hoja (Leaf área ratio, LAR) calculado partir del área foliar total de la planta dividida entre el peso de planta seca (m^2 hoja/ kg planta).

La estimación del carbono acumulado en el experimento 2 se hizo utilizando 0,42 y 0,36 como factores de conversión para la biomasa aérea y radicular respectivamente (Moretto et al., 2001).

Agua consumida

Considerando los tratamientos de riego aplicados a cada tratamiento en cada uno de los experimentos establecidos, se cuantificó el agua aportada en cada caso.

El agua consumida por maceta en el experimento 1 se calculó a partir de la diferencia entre el peso de cada maceta post riego y el peso de la maceta previo al riego siguiente.

El agua consumida por módulo en el experimento 2 se calculó a partir de la diferencia entre el agua aportada por riego o precipitación en cada módulo menos el agua drenada recogida en cada módulo (Fig. 3.8).



Figura 3.8 Recolección de agua drenada en los módulos experimentales - Experimento 2.

La inclusión de macetas (experimento 1) y módulos experimentales (experimento 2) sin vegetación, así como la cuantificación de la cobertura vegetal en cada unidad experimental, permitió la estimación del agua consumida real, descontado la pérdida de agua por evaporación directa del suelo y su variación respecto a la cobertura del momento de medida, a partir de la ecuación 1.2:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Consumo real de agua} = & \text{Consumo de agua maceta o módulo} - \\ & \left(\text{Consumo de agua maceta o módulo sin vegetación} * \left(1 - \right. \right. \\ & \left. \left. \frac{\% \text{ de cobertura de planta}}{100} \right) \right) \dots \dots \dots \text{Eq.(1.2)} \end{aligned}$$

Intercambio de gases

La fotosíntesis neta (A_N) y la conductancia estomática (g_s) son procesos involucrados en la conversión de energía lumínica en energía química (fijación de CO_2) mediante el intercambio de gases entre el ambiente y el tejido de la hoja. En el experimento 1, ambos parámetros fueron medidos para estudiar las respuestas de las especies a las condiciones de sequía media y severa a las que fueron sometidas.

La medición de intercambio de gases se realizó utilizando un equipo de análisis de intercambio de gases (IRGA) Li -600 (Li-Cor 6400, Li-Cor, Inc., USA). El sistema de medición del equipo se basa en la diferencia de CO_2 y de H_2O de la corriente de aire que fluye a través de la cámara y del tejido fotosintético (hoja). Las diferencias detectadas entre el flujo del aire que entra y el que sale de la cámara son detectados por dos analizadores de gas independientes. En este sentido la tasa de asimilación de CO_2 o fotosíntesis neta se expresa en $\mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$, de igual manera la transpiración se determina por el incremento del contenido de agua en la corriente de aire y se expresa en $\text{mmol H}_2\text{O m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$. La conductancia estomática se obtiene a partir de éstas y se expresa en $\text{mol H}_2\text{O m}^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$.

Las condiciones de medida del equipo se especifican en el apartado 4.2 Metodología, del capítulo IV. Considerando que las hojas medidas en varios casos fueron de menor tamaño que el de la cámara, cada una de las mediciones se ha recalculado en función al área de hoja medida.

Eficiencia en el uso del agua

La eficiencia de uso de agua (EUA) se calculó en el experimento 1 mediante dos métodos, ambos explicados con mayor detalle en el Capítulo IV:

- i) Eficiencia en el uso del agua a nivel de planta, como el cociente entre la biomasa seca total y el agua total consumida en el periodo experimental (g/L).
- ii) Eficiencia intrínseca en el uso del agua (determinada a nivel de hoja), expresada en $(\mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ mol H}_2\text{O}^{-1})$ calculada a partir del cociente entre

fotosíntesis neta (A) y conductancia estomática (g_s), obtenidos a partir del análisis de intercambio de gases.

Cuantificación del aislamiento térmico

La detrmnación de los parámetros relacionados con la capacidad de aislamiento térmico se inició una vez establecida la vegetación en los módulos considerados en el diseño del experimento 3, siendo estos los siguientes:

i) el Contenido hídrico del suelo y la temperatura del sustrato, medidos ambos a 7 cm por debajo de la superficie del sustrato con un refractómetro de contenido de agua en suelo CS650 con una precisión de $\pm 5\%$ en la lectura ± 0.05 dS/m (Campbell Scientific, Inc); ii) la temperatura del aire obtenida a partir de los datos colectados por la estación meteorológica del campo experimental de la UIB (Meteodata 3000, Geónica SA, Madrid, España); iii) el flujo de calor utilizando un fluxómetro de calor HFP01 con una precisión del $15\% \pm 5\%$ (Campbell Scientific, Inc) también ubicado a 7 cm bajo la superficie del sustrato. La calibración de los sensores fue ejecutada en ambiente cerrado con el uso de un sensor de referencia (Figuras 3.9 y 3.10).

El periodo de medición del experimento fue anual, sin embargo para hacer más clara la descripción y facilitar el análisis de datos se consideró un periodo de 10 días para cada estación del año de medida: del 9 al 19 de abril de 2014 (primavera), del 12 al 21 de Julio 2014 (verano), del 1 al 10 de Noviembre de 2014 (otoño) y del 11 al 21 de Enero de 2015 (invierno). Las ecuaciones utilizadas para la interpretación de los resultados, así como los detalles de programación se describen en el Capítulo VI.



Figura 3.9 Módulos con sensores ambientales instalados (experimento 3).

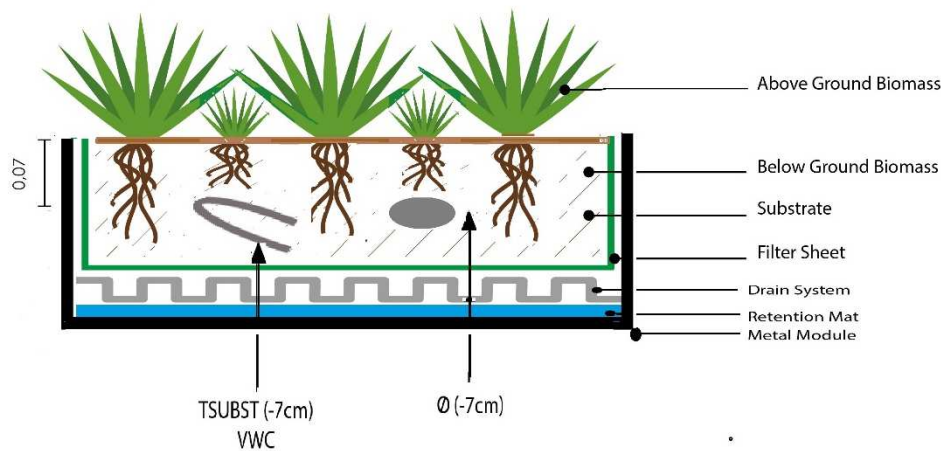


Figura 3.10 Esquema del módulo experimental: disposición de los componentes del sistema y ubicación de los sensores de medición en el experimento 3.

Análisis estadístico

Se llevó a cabo un Análisis de Varianza: Modelo General Lineal, para establecer las diferencias significativas entre variables independientes (p -valor < 0.05). En los casos correspondientes se utilizaron las pruebas a posteriori Duncan y Tukey para establecer las diferencias entre grupos. Se consideraron los parámetros medidos según el diseño experimental planteado en cada caso. Para el análisis de los parámetros medidos semanal o mensualmente (cobertura de planta, coloración y apariencia relativa) se aplicó el Modelo General Lineal de medidas repetidas. El programa de análisis estadístico utilizado fue SPSS 19.0. (SPSS, Chicago, IL USA).

En el experimento 3, se utilizaron pruebas no paramétricas, siendo éstas: i) prueba de Kruskal-Wallis (diferencias significativas indicadas con un p -valor < 0.05) para comparaciones con más de tres grupos y ii) prueba de Mann-Whitney U utilizada para comparar dos grupos (diferencias significativas indicadas con un p -valor < 0.05). En caso de que las comparaciones entre más de tres grupos resultaran significativas se utilizó Mann-Whitney U como prueba a posteriori para determinar las diferencias entre pares.

Capítulo IV

EVALUACIÓN DE SEIS ESPECIES MEDITERRÁNEAS PARA CUBIERTAS AJARDINADAS EXTENSIVAS CON DISPONIBILIDAD HÍDRICA LIMITADA.

Evaluation of six Mediterranean species for extensive green roofs under water-limiting conditions

Keywords Green roofs, Irrigation, Mediterranean climate, Native species, Water stress.

Abstract

The rapid growth of many Mediterranean cities in the past 50 years has led to a deficit in green spaces in areas where water availability is the main limiting factor for gardening. The goal of the present work was to assess the suitability of 6 Mediterranean species to be used in extensive green roofs in Mediterranean and semi-arid areas. *Asteriscus maritimus*, *Brachypodium phoenicoides*, *Crithmum maritimum*, *Limonium virgatum*, *Sedum sediforme* and *Sporobolus pungens* plants were grown under well-watered conditions and two levels of water-limiting conditions to assess the effects of water limitation on their growth capacity, water consumption, photosynthetic capacity, water relations and esthetic value (relative appearance). The results show that water limitation affected each species to a different extent and revealed differences in species performance depending on the ecosystem and social benefits in need of improvement in each situation. *Sedum sediforme* appeared to be the best adapted species to water limitations in terms of relative appearance; however, this species showed a low capacity to grow and consume water under well-watered conditions, which limits its usefulness when stormwater management and carbon storage are two important ecosystem benefits. As an alternative to this species, *Brachypodium phoenicoides* and *Limonium virgatum* showed an adequate esthetical performance under water-limiting conditions and higher water consumption and biomass accumulation when water is available than did *Sedum sediforme*, suggesting these species could be used for green roof implementation in Mediterranean and semi-arid areas.

4.1 Introduction

One of the central causes of environmental impact in the global context is the rapid increase in urban areas and buildings. Urban areas that have grown rapidly are usually characterized by a lack of green areas, which increases the urban heat island effect, environmental pollution and the discomfort index and reduces the quality of life of the population. Different green infrastructures can reduce these negative impacts on the quality of life because these infrastructures are able to provide a wide range of services and benefits to people and environments inside the cities (Hien et al. 2003). Among them, green roofs, a modern modification of the roof-garden concept, are considered new green infrastructures quickly embraced in European and North American cities (Oberndorfer et al. 2007) because of the synergy of their multiple ecosystem benefits. Among these benefits, some of the most important include the capture and retention of stormwater (Fioretti et al. 2010), energy savings derived from the insulation capacity of the green roof (Clark 2008; MacIvor and Lundholm 2011; Hien et al. 2003) and increased albedo values (Lundholm et al. 2010), which may result in the reduction of the urban heat island (Akbari and Konopacki, 2005; Hien et al., 2003; Kolokotsa et al., 2013; Peng and Jim, 2013). In addition, the reduction of atmospheric contamination and acoustic impacts (Veisten et al., 2012; Yang et al., 2008), the improvement of biodiversity in urban areas (Kadas et al 2006; Minke 1992; Oberndorfer et al., 2007), and psychological and social positive impacts (Zielinski 2012; Fernandez-Cañero et al. 2013) have also been highlighted by several studies.

Green roofs, as other green infrastructures, can require large amounts of water, which can be a limiting factor in many areas of the world, such as arid, semi-arid and Mediterranean climate regions (Van Mechelen et al., 2015; Vijayaraghavan, 2016). In these areas, water requirement is a key point in green roof sustainability. In addition, low maintenance requirements in terms of manpower and fertilizer and pesticide use have also to be considered in green roof sustainability. In this sense, extensive green roofs, which are characterized by a shallow substrate and low maintenance requirements, are types of green roofs that can be incorporated on many buildings because, in addition to their low cost of implementation and maintenance, they do not usually need structural reinforcement. In contrast to

these positive traits, extensive green roofs are also characterized by very harsh conditions for plant performance and survival; these conditions are even more difficult in dry climates, such as the Mediterranean, in which high sun exposure and temperatures coincide with the dry period. Some reports have then suggested the interest of irrigation supply to ensure plant survival and establishment under those conditions (Nagase and Dunnett, 2010; Williams et al., 2010; Schweitzer and Erell, 2014; Van Mechelen et al., 2015; Vestrella, 2015). By the other hand shallow and mineral substrates with both low capacity for water retention and low fertility are very useful for reducing maintenance costs by reducing weeds and plant growth. However, these substrates also represent a challenge for plant performance in areas where water is scarce. In this scenario, plant selection is a key point in green roof sustainability and optimal performance (Bevilacqua et al., 2015; Johnston and Newton, 2004; Minke, 1992).

Despite the controversy about native vs. non-native species performance (Butler et al., 2012), it is widely accepted that green roof efficiency and sustainability can be improved by selecting plant species from natural habitats with similar environmental conditions as those of the green roofs (Dirks et al., 2016; Farrell et al., 2013; Lundholm et al., 2010; Van Mechelen et al., 2014)

Moreover, green roof function is highly affected by plant selection, as different plant traits affect to a great extent some green roof functions. In this sense, species showing high biomass accumulation and high leaf area index values increase the insulation capacity of green roofs (Hien et al 2003; Speak et al. 2013), although these traits also imply higher maintenance requirements and higher water consumption. Some studies suggested that species with low water consumption are not efficient at stormwater management because they are not able to deplete soil water content during the rainy season (Farrell et al. 2013); this trait may be essential for plant survival under extensive green roof conditions in Mediterranean climate regions. Plant selection should thus be performed accurately, considering not only the environmental conditions but also the potential benefits that the implementation of the green roof is targeting. As such, the availability of a large number of species suitable for extensive green roofs would aid green roof implementation, as this wide-ranging availability would increase the possibility to achieve the different functions and ecosystem benefits that make green roofs interesting components of green infrastructures in urban

areas. Nevertheless, the availability of plant species suitable for extensive green roofs in dry climates is still scarce due to both the harsh environmental conditions in cities where the dry season is the main environmental constraint. Consequently, the evaluation of plant species from dry climates in different water regimens, would be useful to increase the availability of plant species suitable for each situation, i.e., environmental conditions and benefits to be enhanced.

The general objective of this work was to study the suitability of 6 Mediterranean species to be used in extensive green roofs in Mediterranean and semi-arid areas; specifically, the goals were i) to study the ability of these species to cope with water stress by determining plant growth under three different water regimes; ii) to determine the ability of these species to consume water in order to evaluate their interest in storm water management; and iii) to assess the esthetic value of these species under three different irrigation treatments.

4.2 Materials and methods

A factorial experiment was conducted using a completely randomized design with six species and three treatments as factors to study and assess the effects of water availability on plant water consumption, plant growth, leaf gas exchange and esthetical value. The experiment was carried out at the University of the Balearic Islands, Spain (West Mediterranean Basin, 39°38' N, 2°38' E, 80 m a.s.l.). Typical monthly average temperature between May and August range between 23.3 to 31,1 °C., and the typical precipitation mean is 13 mm (AEMET, 2015).

Plant selection

Six species were selected from an elaborate previous list of 25 species native to the Balearic Islands: *Asteriscus maritimus*, *Brachypodium phoenicoides*, *Crithmum maritimum*, *Limonium virgatum*, *Sedum sediforme* and *Sporobolus pungens* (Table 4.1). This selection was performed according to the following selection criteria: original habitat with shallow and/or poor substrate, perennial and/or self-reseeding species, slow growth and limited biomass production and potential esthetic interest. Seeds were collected from dunes or rocky habitats

characterized by limited water availability, shallow substrate, high radiation and/or wind exposure.

Table 4.1. Family name, life form, natural habitat and season of propagule collection of the plant species included in this study.

| Species | Family | Life form | Natural habitat | Seed or propagule collection season |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------|---|--|
| <i>Asteriscus maritimus</i> | Compositae | Chamaephyte | Bare coastal and rocky areas near the sea | July to November |
| <i>Brachypodium phoenicoides</i> | Poaceae | Hemicryptophyte | Dry grasslands and pine forest margins | July and August |
| <i>Crithmum maritimum</i> | Umbelliferae | Chamaephyte | Coastal zones | September and October |
| <i>Limonium virgatum</i> | Plumbaginaceae | Chamaephyte | Coastal salty soils | September to November |
| <i>Sporobolus pungens</i> | Poaceae | Geophyte | Coastal sandy soils | July |
| <i>Sedum sediforme</i> | Crassulaceae | Chamaephyte | Rock crevices | August to October |

Experimental design

Seeds were germinated between October and November of 2012, and seedlings were grown in seed benches under greenhouse conditions until February 2013, after which they were placed outdoors to facilitate plant acclimation. After 2 weeks, 24 plants of each species were transplanted into 4-L plastic pots. In an attempt to mimic extensive green roof conditions, a commercially distributed substrate composed of a recycled product based on specially processed clay tiles and 10.6% organic material was used. This substrate is considered suitable for extensive green roofs due to its stable structure, with multilayer build-ups that reduce water loss. Its soil water content at field capacity (27.9%) was determined by the gravimetric method. To avoid nutrient deficiencies, each plant was fertilized on March 29th with 28 g of N, 19 g of P₂O₅ and 19 g of K₂O.

The experiment lasted 88 days (from May 6th to August 2nd), and 18 plants per species were kept at soil field capacity by restoring 100% of the water consumed

every 2-3 days until June 3rd (28 days after initiation). From day 28 to day 40 after initiation, a progressive water-limited treatment was imposed on 12 plants by restoring only 70% of water consumed for each pot to ensure a progressive soil water content depletion until pots reached 75% and 50% of water content at field capacity. It was possible to determine pot weights with 100%, 75% and 50% of field capacity since plastic pots weight and water content at field capacity were previously determined. From day 40 after initiation until the end of the experiment, 6 plants per treatment were maintained at 100%, 75% and 50% of field capacity, which correspond to well-watered (WW), mild drought (MD) and severe drought (SD), respectively, as it is represented in figure 4.1. To estimate plant water consumption, each pot was weighted before and after irrigation along the whole experiment. In addition, 18 substrate-only pots (6 pots per treatment) were used to determine substrate evaporation rates following the same water irrigation treatments.

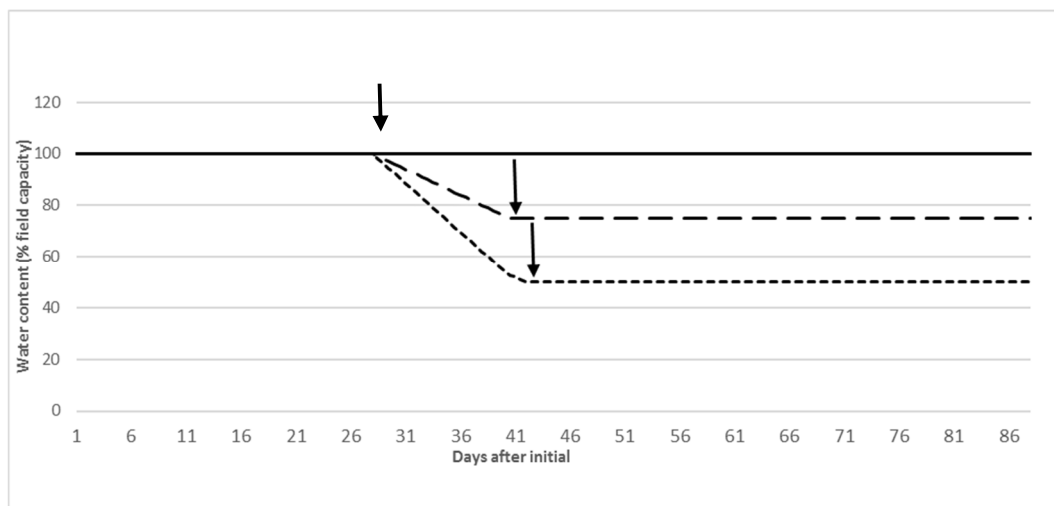


Figure 4.1. Evolution of substrate water content (as % of field capacity) of each treatment (100% of field capacity, solid line; 75% of field capacity, dashed line; 50% of field capacity, dotted line) along the experiment. The substrate water content was kept at the % of field capacity indicated after each irrigation event (every 2-3 days) by restoring 100% or 80% (during the substrate water content depletion in 75% and 50% treatments) of consumed water.

Biomass measurements

The initial aerial (AB_0) and root (RB_0) dry biomass and the final aerial (AB_f) and root (RB_f) dry biomass were determined at the beginning (day 0) and at the end (day 88) of the experiment in six plants per species and treatment after oven-

drying the fresh biomass for 72 h at 70°C. At the end of the experiment, senescent biomass was considered separately from the green aerial biomass. Root biomass was separated from the soil using a hose pipe and a sieve to avoid biomass losses as much as possible, and aerial biomass was measured by separating leaves, stems and flowers. Leaf area was measured for a representative subsample of leaves of each plant using ImageJ (A public domain program developed by the U.S. National Institutes of Health and available on the Internet at <http://rsb.info.nih.gov/nih-image>), and specific leaf area (SLA, m² kg⁻¹ leaf) was then calculated as leaf area/leaf dry biomass. Total plant leaf area was calculated as total plant dry leaf biomass * specific leaf area. For each plant, leaf area ratio (LAR, m² leaf kg⁻¹ plant) was calculated as total plant leaf area/total plant dry biomass. Grass species were maintained at a juvenile phase by cutting the inflorescences during the last two weeks of the experiment, which were oven-dried for biomass determination. To obtain a reliable quantification of appearance of each species and treatment, senescent biomass was measured separately. Dry biomass production per plant was estimated as the final biomass-initial biomass of the different components: $TDM = ADM + RDM + SM / ADM = LDM + SDM + FDM$, where TDM is the total plant dry matter production; ADM is the aerial dry matter production; LDM is the leaf dry matter production; SDM is the stem dry matter production; FDM is the flower dry matter production; RDM is the root dry matter production; and SM is the senescent dry mass.

Gas exchange measurements

Net photosynthesis (A_N), stomatal conductance (g_s), and transpiration (E) at the leaf level were measured on young fully expanded leaves on July 7th on six replicates per treatment for each species (except *Sedum sediforme* due to leaf anatomical and metabolic characteristics) using an infrared gas analyzer (Li-Cor 6400, Li-Cor, Inc., USA). The cuvette conditions were fixed at 1500 $\mu\text{mol photons m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$ to ensure light-saturated photosynthesis; the CO₂ partial pressure was set to 380 $\mu\text{L L}^{-1}$, and air flux was maintained between 100 and 200 $\mu\text{mol s}^{-1}$ to obtain more accurate measurements. The measurements were performed during mid-mornings of sunny days on healthy leaves exposed to the sun. Since some

samples did not cover the whole chamber surface, the surface area of each sample was measured using a digital image of the leaf and the Image J program. Each measurement performed throughout the experiment was then corrected for total surface area of the sample measured.

Leaf relative water content

Leaf predawn and midday relative water content (RWC) values were determined on six replicates of each species and treatment once irrigation treatments were established (day 71). RWC was calculated as $RWC = (\text{fresh weight} - \text{dry weight}) / (\text{turgid weight} - \text{dry weight}) \times 100$. Fresh weight was determined immediately after sampling. Turgid weight was determined after 24 h in distilled water at 4°C in the dark, after which the samples were oven-dried for 48 h at 70°C to determine their dry weight.

Water consumption

Water consumption was measured in each pot by gravimetric methods (Eq. 4.1). To account for direct substrate evaporation, individual plant cover was measured by digital images, 3 times along the experiment (one at the experiment beginning, one at the beginning the progressive water-limited treatment and one at 42nd day) (Fig 4.1), and water loss of bare pots were measured during the experiment in order to estimate direct substrate evaporation. Therefore, it was possible to estimate the real water consumption per pot discounting substrate direct evaporation from the pot surface not covered by the plant (Eq.4. 2).

Eq (4.1) Water consume per pot = Pot weight before irrigation- Pot weight after irrigation

Eq (4.2) Real plant water consumption per pot = Water consumption per pot with plant - (Water consumption per bare pot * (1- (% of plant cover per pot** / 100))

* Water consumption per bare pot was different according to each irrigation event and water treatment applied, and ** plant cover varied three times along the experiment

Water use efficiency

Water use efficiency (WUE) was measured and estimated by two methods: i) Water use efficiency at the plant level (WUE_T), calculated as total plant dry matter production (TDM) / total water consumption (H_2O_c) of each pot during the experiment ($g L^{-1}$); and ii) Water use efficiency at the leaf level, as intrinsic water use efficiency ($iWUE$) calculated as net photosynthesis (A_N) / stomatal conductance (g_s).

Esthetical evaluation

To perform the esthetical evaluation, a methodology is proposed considering parameters previously evaluated by other surveys, such as leaves and stems color, the number of leaves, stress status, plant survival and flowering (Monterusso et al., 2005; Nagase and Dunnett, 2010; Butler and Orians, 2011). Therefore, in order to evaluate relative appearance (RA) four esthetic parameters were taken into account: i) plant and leaf color, ii) plant shape, iii) plant vigor, and iv) flowering, thus each parameter was scored weekly by observation using specific aspects for each one in a scale from 1 to 3 (Table 4.2). Relative appearance per plant was the mean score of each parameter score.

Table 4.2. Plant traits and the Likert scale considered in the esthetical evaluation (relative appearance) of the plants.

| Value scale | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Plant Color | Optimal color richness | Acceptable color richness | Senescent (brown leaves) |
| Flowering | High density | Low density | Absence |
| Plant Vigor | Optimal (turgid leaves) | Adequate (seldom dehydrated leaves) | Inadequate (several dehydrated leaves) |
| Plant Shape | Optimal (compact) | Adequate (partially open) | Inadequate (formless) |

Statistical analysis

The general linear model analysis for total dry mass (TDM), aerial dry mass (ADM), root dry mass (RDM), senescent mass (SM), plant height, (H_2O_c), water

use efficiency at plant and leaf level (WUE_T , $iWUE$), Net photosynthesis A , stomatal conductance (g_s), and relative water content (RWC) was performed in accordance with a factorial experiment using a completely randomized design with two factors and six replicates and the SPSS 16.0 software package. Differences between means were revealed by Tukey's post hoc analyses ($P < 0.05$). To evaluate differences for relative appearance each weekly measurement was analyzed, differences between means were revealed by Tukey's post hoc analyses ($P < 0.05$). Pearson's correlation analysis was performed on the following parameters: TDM, LA, WC, SM, $iWUE$, WUE_T and RA.

4.3 Results

During the experimental period, mean air temperature was 22.07 °C, and maximum temperature was registered the first day of August (33.24 °C), no significant precipitation event occurred during this period (the total precipitation during 88 experimental days was 4.6 mm),

Plant growth and survival

Total dry matter (TDM) and aerial dry matter (ADM) were lower under water-limiting conditions than under well-watered conditions in all species (Table 4.3). However, water treatments affected species to a different extent: *C. maritimum* and *S. sediforme* showed no significant differences in either TDM or ADM among water treatments, while the grasses (*B. phoenicoides* and *S. pungens*) and *L. virgatum* showed the highest reductions in both parameters under water-limiting conditions. Moreover, *S. pungens* was the only species showing a significant reduction in ADM between mild and severe drought treatments (Table 4.3). Root dry biomass (RDM) significantly (Table 4.3) decreased under severe drought conditions only in *B. phoenicoides* and *S. pungens*, but it was not affected by water availability in *L. virgatum*, *S. sediforme* or *A. maritimus*. Differences among species in biomass partitioning were also significant ($p < 0.05$). *Sporobolus pungens* showed the highest root mass ratio (RMR, root dry matter / total dry matter) (45.07%); *S. sediforme*, the lowest (7.19%) (Fig. 2).

Senescent biomass was not significantly increased as a consequence of severe drought with the exception of *C. maritimum* (Table 4.3), although the ratio of senescent biomass/total biomass increased in *B. phoenicoides* and in *C. maritimum* under severe drought conditions (Table 4.3 and Fig. 4.2). However, important differences were observed among species: *S. sediforme* showed no senescent mass accumulation regardless of water availability compared with *A. maritimus*, which produced the greatest amount of senescent mass (40% and 38% of total dry mass under severe and mild drought, respectively).

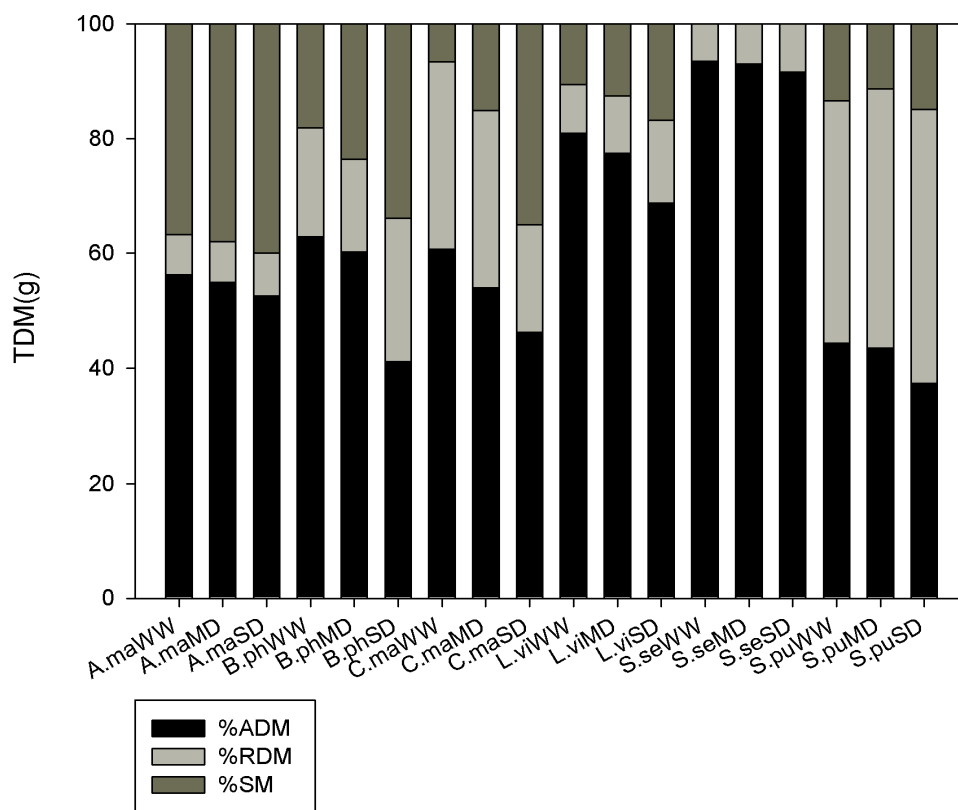


Figure 4.2 Biomass partitioning: Aerial dry mass (ADM), root dry mass (RDM) and senescent mass (SM) as a percent of total dry mass (TDM) in *Asteriscus maritimus* (A.ma), *Brachypodium phoenicoides* (B.ph), *Crithmum maritimum* (C.ma), *Limonium virgatum* (L.vi), *Sedum sediforme* (S.se) and *Sporobolus pungens* (S.pu) grown under well-watered (WW), mild drought (MD) and severe drought (SD) conditions.

Leaf area (LA) significantly decreased with water availability in all measured species except in *C. maritimum* and *L. virgatum*, and leaf area ratio (LAR) was significantly affected by water availability only in both *B. phoenicoides* and *A. maritimus* (Table 3). *Brachypodium phoenicoides* registered the highest LA and

LAR values under well-watered conditions ($310 \text{ cm}^2 \text{ plant}^{-1}$ and $7.6 \text{ m}^2 \text{ kg}^{-1}$, respectively). The grass species, *B. phoenicoides* and *S. pungens*, registered the highest LA reduction under water-limiting conditions, up to 2/3. Soil water availability significantly reduced the height of *B. phoenicoides* and *L. virgatum*. *Asteriscus maritimus* and *S. sediforme* were the shortest species regardless of water treatment (Table 4.3). Specific leaf area (SLA) increased in all species but significant differences were only observed in *B. phoenicoides*, *C. maritimum* and *L. virgatum* under mild and severe stress conditions (Table 3).

All the studied species showed a significant decrease in water consumption under severe drought conditions (Table 4.3): *S. pungens* and *B. phoenicoides* showed the highest reductions, (62 and 55%, respectively), and *C. maritimum* and *L. virgatum* showed the lowest (34 and 42%, respectively). Water consumption differed substantially among species: *B. phoenicoides* and *L. virgatum* were the highest water consumers under well-watered conditions (7.7 and 6.6 mm day^{-1} , respectively). In contrast, *C. maritimum* and *S. sediforme* consumed the lowest amounts of water (2.0 and 1.5 mm day^{-1} , respectively) under the same conditions. Water use efficiency at the plant level (WUE_T) significantly increased under water-limiting conditions in *A. maritimus*, while in the other species, WUE_T was not significantly affected by water treatment. Differences among species were also significant: *S. pungens* (a C_4 grass) showed the highest WUE_T ; *C. maritimum*, the lowest.

Table 4.3: Total dry mass production (TDM), aerial dry biomass production (ADM), root dry biomass production (RDM), senescent mass (SM), water consumption (WC), plant height (H), leaf area ratio (LAR), leaf area (LA), specific leaf area (SLA) and water use efficiency at the plant level (WUE_T) for plants under well-watered (WW), mild drought (MD) and severe drought (SD) conditions. Values represent means \pm s.e. (n=6). Different lowercase letters denote significant differences at $p < 0.05$ among treatments.

| | | TDM (g) | ADM (g) | RDM (g) | SM (g) | WC (mm day ⁻¹) | H (cm) | LAR (m ² kg ⁻¹) | LA (m ²) | SLA (m ² kg ⁻¹) | WUE_T (g L ⁻¹) |
|------------------------|----|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <i>A. maritimus</i> | WW | 37.00 \pm 1.90 ^a | 20.72 \pm 0.88 ^a | 2.58 \pm 0.23 ^a | 13.70 \pm 0.98 ^a | 5.50 \pm 0.22 ^a | 7.58 \pm 0.49 ^a | 1.32 \pm 0.14 ^a | 0.048 \pm 0.01 ^a | 15.86 \pm 2.24 ^a | 3.39 \pm 0.07 ^b |
| | MD | 35.62 \pm 1.62 ^a | 19.53 \pm 0.83 ^{ab} | 2.55 \pm 0.23 ^a | 13.55 \pm 0.65 ^a | 4.36 \pm 0.06 ^b | 7.75 \pm 0.59 ^a | 1.51 \pm 0.13 ^a | 0.055 \pm 0.01 ^a | 27.31 \pm 3.77 ^a | 4.13 \pm 0.17 ^a |
| | SD | 30.25 \pm 0.83 ^a | 15.92 \pm 0.52 ^b | 2.26 \pm 0.27 ^a | 12.06 \pm 0.25 ^a | 3.06 \pm 0.11 ^c | 8.58 \pm 0.32 ^a | 0.72 \pm 0.22 ^b | 0.025 \pm 0.11 ^b | 31.57 \pm 7.56 ^a | 5.03 \pm 0.18 ^a |
| <i>B. phoenicoides</i> | WW | 40.11 \pm 1.99 ^a | 24.95 \pm 1.03 ^a | 7.91 \pm 1.18 ^a | 7.25 \pm 0.97 ^a | 7.66 \pm 0.23 ^a | 40.75 \pm 1.95 ^a | 7.67 \pm 0.29 ^a | 0.310 \pm 0.02 ^a | 13.47 \pm 1.21 ^b | 2.64 \pm 0.09 ^{ab} |
| | MD | 20.64 \pm 1.76 ^b | 12.40 \pm 1.05 ^b | 3.33 \pm 0.27 ^b | 4.91 \pm 0.65 ^a | 4.64 \pm 0.11 ^b | 33.67 \pm 1.36 ^a | 8.51 \pm 0.56 ^a | 0.173 \pm 0.01 ^{ab} | 13.39 \pm 0.54 ^b | 2.23 \pm 0.15 ^b |
| | SD | 18.98 \pm 0.9 ^b | 8.27 \pm 1.81 ^b | 4.53 \pm 0.48 ^b | 6.18 \pm 0.31 ^a | 3.48 \pm 0.27 ^b | 24.75 \pm 1.51 ^b | 5.07 \pm 0.68 ^b | 0.100 \pm 0.02 ^b | 17.45 \pm 2.66 ^a | 2.76 \pm 0.15 ^a |
| <i>C. maritimum</i> | WW | 7.23 \pm 1.34 ^a | 4.34 \pm 0.81 ^a | 2.36 \pm 0.49 ^a | 0.54 \pm 0.30 ^b | 2.06 \pm 0.16 ^a | 10.75 \pm 0.67 ^a | 2.94 \pm 0.14 ^a | 0.020 \pm 0.01 ^a | 8.17 \pm 0.57 ^b | 1.74 \pm 0.28 ^a |
| | MD | 9.82 \pm 1.76 ^a | 5.69 \pm 1.46 ^a | 2.61 \pm 0.42 ^a | 1.52 \pm 0.35 ^{ab} | 1.65 \pm 0.0 ^{ab} | 11.42 \pm 1.27 ^a | 6.26 \pm 3.69 ^a | 0.062 \pm 0.04 ^a | 8.22 \pm 1.49 ^b | 3.03 \pm 0.60 ^a |
| | SD | 6.61 \pm 1.14 ^a | 3.06 \pm 0.55 ^a | 1.23 \pm 0.22 ^a | 2.32 \pm 0.49 ^a | 1.36 \pm 0.15 ^b | 8.25 \pm 0.96 ^a | 2.15 \pm 0.39 ^a | 0.019 \pm 0.1 ^a | 19.82 \pm 5.01 ^a | 2.62 \pm 0.44 ^a |
| <i>L. virgatum</i> | WW | 45.78 \pm 2.91 ^a | 37.06 \pm 2.36 ^a | 4.01 \pm 0.62 ^a | 4.71 \pm 0.71 ^a | 6.62 \pm 0.27 ^a | 41.92 \pm 0.90 ^a | 1.90 \pm 0.45 ^a | 0.083 \pm 0.02 ^a | 13.48 \pm 0.65 ^b | 3.49 \pm 0.16 ^a |
| | MD | 36.06 \pm 2.39 ^b | 27.94 \pm 1.91 ^b | 3.54 \pm 0.28 ^a | 4.57 \pm 0.59 ^a | 4.99 \pm 0.21 ^b | 31.33 \pm 2.04 ^b | 1.90 \pm 0.13 ^a | 0.068 \pm 0.01 ^a | 17.10 \pm 2.61 ^{ab} | 3.67 \pm 0.24 ^a |
| | SD | 29.61 \pm 1.44 ^b | 20.33 \pm 1.02 ^c | 4.28 \pm 0.34 ^a | 5.01 \pm 0.57 ^a | 3.85 \pm 0.35 ^c | 26.50 \pm 1.41 ^c | 1.54 \pm 0.16 ^a | 0.046 \pm 0.01 ^a | 33.68 \pm 7.86 ^a | 3.40 \pm 0.27 ^a |
| <i>S. pungens</i> | WW | 48.68 \pm 3.95 ^a | 21.73 \pm 2.15 ^a | 20.30 \pm 1.18 ^a | 6.65 \pm 0.91 ^a | 5.08 \pm 0.15 ^a | 17.92 \pm 1.38 ^a | 4.32 \pm 0.35 ^a | 0.206 \pm 0.01 ^a | 24.35 \pm 2.05 ^b | 4.81 \pm 0.29 ^a |
| | MD | 33.56 \pm 2.69 ^b | 14.72 \pm 1.51 ^b | 14.95 \pm 0.80 ^b | 3.90 \pm 0.59 ^b | 3.65 \pm 0.16 ^b | 14.67 \pm 1.50 ^{ab} | 3.20 \pm 0.56 ^a | 0.111 \pm 0.012 ^b | 18.67 \pm 3.44 ^{ab} | 4.62 \pm 0.22 ^a |
| | SD | 21.9 \pm 1.43 ^b | 8.02 \pm 0.37 ^c | 10.80 \pm 1.60 ^b | 3.17 \pm 0.24 ^b | 1.95 \pm 0.12 ^c | 12.58 \pm 0.89 ^b | 3.28 \pm 0.29 ^a | 0.071 \pm 0.01 ^b | 29.30 \pm 2.17 ^a | 5.79 \pm 0.49 ^a |
| <i>S. sediforme</i> | WW | 7.55 \pm 1.46 ^a | 7.11 \pm 1.40 ^a | 0.44 \pm 0.06 ^a | 0 \pm 0 ^a | 1.58 \pm 0.08 ^a | 8.00 \pm 0.63 ^a | | | | 2.51 \pm 0.54 ^a |
| | MD | 4.85 \pm 0.59 ^a | 4.51 \pm 0.55 ^a | 0.34 \pm 0.04 ^a | 0 \pm 0 ^a | 0.85 \pm 0.03 ^b | 7.83 \pm 0.32 ^a | | | | 2.92 \pm 0.42 ^a |
| | SD | 4.72 \pm 0.28 ^a | 4.33 \pm 0.28 ^a | 0.39 \pm 0.02 ^a | 0 \pm 0 ^a | 0.82 \pm 0.03 ^b | 7.83 \pm 0.30 ^a | | | | 2.96 \pm 0.27 ^a |

Stomatal conductance (g_s) and net photosynthesis (A_N) were significantly reduced under severe drought conditions in all species except in *B. phoenicoides* (Table 4.4). The greatest reduction in both A and g_s was registered in *L. virgatum* and the lowest in *S. pungens* (90% and 75%, respectively). Leaf intrinsic water use efficiency ($iWUE$) increased under water-limiting conditions in all species, although those differences were only significant for *C. maritimum* and *L. virgatum* (Table 4). *Sporobolus pungens* and *B. phoenicoides* showed the highest and the lowest $iWUE$ under well-watered conditions (177.4 and $82.6 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ mol}^{-1} \text{ H}_2\text{O}$, respectively). Under severe drought, *L. virgatum* and *A. maritimus* showed the highest and the lowest $iWUE$ values of 189.8 and $92.6 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ mol}^{-1} \text{ H}_2\text{O}$, respectively. WUE_T and $iWUE$ were significantly and positively correlated (Table 4.5). It is interesting to highlight that WUE_T was significantly correlated with total dry biomass but not with water consumption.

Relative water content at predawn (RWC_{PD}) and midday (RWC_{MD}) decreased in all species under severe drought conditions, although those differences were significant only in *A. maritimus* and in *S. pungens* only at predawn (Table 4). *Asteriscus maritimus* showed the lowest RWC_{PD} and RWC_{MD} (62.3% and 56.4% , respectively). *Sporobolus pungens* and *C. maritimum* registered the highest RWC_{PD} and RWC_{MD} values of 90.2% and 80.6% , respectively. RWC_{MD} was significantly lower than RWC_{PD} in all species except in *B. phoenicoides* and *S. sediforme*.

Table 4.4: Net photosynthesis (A), stomatal conductance (g), intrinsic water use efficiency ($iWUE$) and relative water content at predawn and midday (RWC_{PD} and RWC_{MD} , respectively) for plants under well-watered (WW), mild drought (MD) and severe drought (SD) conditions. Values represent means \pm s.e. (n=6). Different letters denote significant differences at $p < 0.05$ among treatments within each species. (*) denotes significant differences at $p \leq 0.05$ between RWC_{PD} and RWC_{MD} values within the same species and treatment.

| | | A_N ($\mu\text{mol CO}_2$ $\text{m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$) | g_s ($\text{mol H}_2\text{O}$ $\text{m}^{-2} \text{s}^{-1}$) | $iWUE$ (μmol $\text{CO}_2 \text{ mol H}_2\text{O}^{-1}$) | RWC_{PD} (%) | RWC_{MD} (%) |
|------------------------|----|--|--|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| A. maritimus | WW | 15.39 \pm 1.28 ^a | 0.19 \pm 0.02 ^a | 83.36 \pm 2.57 ^a | 81.2 \pm 1.1 ^{a(*)} | 73.9 \pm 0.6 ^a |
| | MD | 10.68 \pm 1.33 ^a | 0.11 \pm 0.02 ^a | 99.12 \pm 4.34 ^a | 72.0 \pm 3.0 ^{a(*)} | 67.5 \pm 3.2 ^a |
| | SD | 1.39 \pm 0.13 ^b | 0.02 \pm 0.0 ^b | 92.63 \pm 6.84 ^a | 62.3 \pm 4.8 ^b | 56.4 \pm 1.2 ^a |
| B. phoenicoides | WW | 4.67 \pm 1.82 ^a | 0.09 \pm 0.03 ^a | 82.57 \pm 17.05 ^a | 95.4 \pm 0.1 ^a | 94.7 \pm 1.3 ^a |
| | MD | 3.35 \pm 1.9 ^a | 0.04 \pm 0.01 ^a | 82.30 \pm 19.32 ^a | 94.6 \pm 0.7 ^a | 91.7 \pm 1.7 ^{ab} |
| | SD | 3.77 \pm 0.24 ^a | 0.03 \pm 0.03 ^a | 124.00 \pm 9.04 ^a | 89.4 \pm 1.2 ^a | 80.3 \pm 4.0 ^b |
| C. maritimum | WW | 12.97 \pm 2.74 ^a | 0.17 \pm 0.05 ^a | 90.48 \pm 11.70 ^a | 92.9 \pm 1.3 ^{a(*)} | 82.4 \pm 1.9 ^a |
| | MD | 7.25 \pm 3.69 ^a | 0.11 \pm 0.01 ^a | 108.12 \pm 3.81 ^a | 91.1 \pm 0.9 ^{a(*)} | 83.9 \pm 1.9 ^a |
| | SD | 2.77 \pm 0.76 ^a | 0.02 \pm 0.0 ^a | 181.84 \pm 3.00 ^b | 85.0 \pm 3.7 ^a | 80.6 \pm 3.8 ^a |
| L. virgatum | WW | 19.54 \pm 2.57 ^a | 0.23 \pm 0.03 ^a | 88.77 \pm 10.60 ^a | 87.7 \pm 2.2 ^{a(*)} | 72.2 \pm 3.2 ^a |
| | MD | 14.16 \pm 1.2 ^a | 0.11 \pm 0.01 ^b | 136.67 \pm 5.06 ^b | 83.4 \pm 3.4 ^{a(*)} | 70.0 \pm 2.5 ^a |
| | SD | 2.53 \pm 0.59 ^b | 0.01 \pm 0.00 ^c | 189.76 \pm 9.48 ^c | 83.9 \pm 1.5 ^{a(*)} | 70.1 \pm 3.5 ^a |
| S. pungens | WW | 27.04 \pm 3.20 ^a | 0.15 \pm 0.01 ^a | 177.44 \pm 6.36 ^a | 96.6 \pm 0.9 ^{a(*)} | 81.5 \pm 2.2 ^a |
| | MD | 25.78 \pm 2.96 ^a | 0.13 \pm 0.01 ^a | 199.47 \pm 0.57 ^a | 97.0 \pm 1.0 ^{a(*)} | 88.7 \pm 1.4 ^a |
| | SD | 7.00 \pm 2.05 ^b | 0.04 \pm 0.01 ^b | 172.84 \pm 13.57 ^a | 90.3 \pm 2.8 ^{a(*)} | 74.8 \pm 2.0 ^b |
| S. sediforme | WW | | | | 85.7 \pm 1.8 ^a | 86.9 \pm 2.1 ^a |
| | MD | | | | 76.9 \pm 2.3 ^{ab} | 80.4 \pm 1.2 ^a |
| | SD | | | | 72.3 \pm 3.6 ^b | 78.6 \pm 3.7 ^a |

Esthetic evaluation results

The relative appearance (RA) of most species decreased under severe water stress at the end of the experiment; only *S. sediforme* plants did not show any change in RA regardless of water treatment (Fig. 4.3). *Asteriscus maritimus* showed the earliest and deepest decrease in RA as a consequence of water shortage: from day 43, these plants under severe stress registered RA values below 2.5. Moreover, *A. maritimus* plants in well-watered and mild drought conditions also showed an RA decrease during the last two weeks of the experiment. Such a decrease in mild drought and well-watered plants was not observed in other species. *Limonium virgatum* and *B. phoenicoides* plants also showed an early significant decrease in RA under severe stress conditions, but this decrease was not as deep as in *A. maritimus*. *Crithmum maritimum* and *S.*

pungens plants only showed a significant RA decrease under severe stress during the last 2 and 3 weeks of the experiment, respectively. RA was poorly correlated with physiological and morphological parameters; only significant correlations between RA and senescent biomass and WUE_T were observed (Table 4.5).

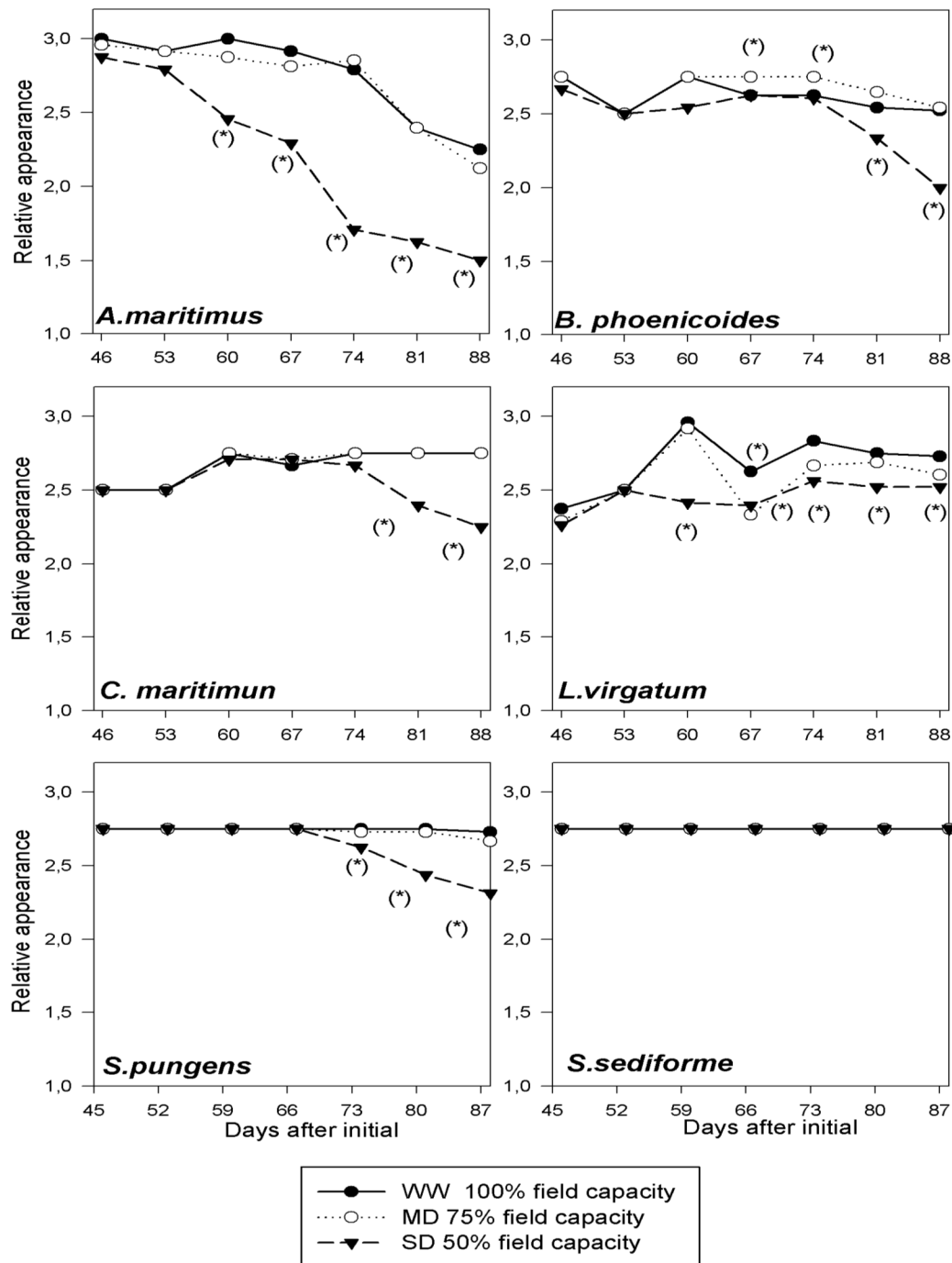


Figure 4.3. Progression of the relative appearance (RA) of plants grown under well-watered (WW), mild drought (MD) and severe drought (SD) conditions. Values are the means of 6 replicates. (*) denotes significant differences between treatments ($p \leq 0.05$)

Table 4.5. Pearson's correlation coefficients among total dry biomass production (TDM), leaf area (LA), water consumption (WC), senescent mass (SM), intrinsic water use efficiency (iWUE), water use efficiency at the plant level (WUE_T), relative appearance (RA) and leaf area ratio (LAR). All species and treatments were included in the analyses. (*) and (**) denote statistical significance at $P < 0.05$ and $P < 0.01$, respectively.

| | | LA | WC | SM | iWUE | WUE _T | RA | LAR |
|------------|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|------------------|---------|--------|
| 4.4 | TDM | .563** | .854** | .676** | .184 | .509** | -.069 | .105 |
| | LA | | .683** | .258** | .104 | .064 | .077 | .735** |
| | WC | | | .568** | -.184 | .064 | .103 | .287 |
| | SM | | | | -.221 | .369** | -.238* | .016 |
| | iWUE | | | | | .509** | -.175 | -.021 |
| | WUE_T | | | | | | -.366** | -.155 |
| | RA | | | | | | | .053 |
| | LAR | | | | | | | |

Discussion

In this work, the potential of six Mediterranean species with different life forms and leaf habits was studied to be used in extensive green roofs under water-limiting conditions. *Sedum sediforme*, a species commonly used in green roofs, appeared to be the most drought resistant in terms of esthetic appearance. However, other species such as *Brachypodium phoenicoides*, *Limonium virgatum* and *Sporobolus pungens* showed higher biomass accumulation and water consumption and maintained a relatively high esthetic appearance under mild drought, which suggests these species could be used in extensive green roofs in which storm water management and carbon fixation are benefits to be prioritized. Advantages and disadvantages of each species are discussed in this section, taking into consideration the environmental characteristics and social interests.

Biomass reduction has largely been reported as a plant primary response to water stress (Blum, 2005; Galmés et al. 2005; Gulías, Flexas, Abadía, and Medrano, 2002). However, such a response varies to a great extent depending on the species and stress level (Farrell et al., 2013; Gulias et al., 2002; Nagase and Dunnett, 2010; Wolf and Lundholm, 2008). In this study, all species showed a total biomass reduction when water availability decreased, which was highest in the grass species (*B. phoenicoides* and *S. pungens*) and lowest in those species showing fleshy leaves (*S. sediforme* and *C. maritimum*). Moreover, those species showing the highest biomass production under well-watered conditions

were those that underwent the highest reduction in biomass under water stress, and conversely, *S. sediforme* and *C. maritimum* showed the lowest biomass production under well-watered conditions and the lowest biomass reduction when water availability decreased. Similar results have been reported in many studies (Galmes and Flexas, 2005; Galmes, J., Conesa, M.A., Cifre, J., Gulías, J., Medrano, H., 2010; Gulias et al., 2002) and have been explained as a general tradeoff between growth capacity and stress resistance in plants (Gulías et al., 2012; Wright et al., 2004). Despite the causes and the ecological and agronomic consequences of this tradeoff having been widely discussed, the mechanism of this tradeoff is still under debate (Wallace, 2000). From a green roof perspective, plant biomass reduction under water stress has several implications. The reduction in biomass and in plant height reduces clearing and mowing frequencies, leading to lower green cover maintenance, and increasing the economical sustainability of green roof implementation. However, biomass reduction limits the insulation capacity (Barrio, 1998; Speak et al., 2013) and the ability of carbon storage, which have been noted as ecological benefits of green roof implementation (Bianchini and Hewage, 2012; Getter et al., 2009). Nevertheless, in Mediterranean and semi-arid areas, the main limitation to green roof implementation is water availability, since in these areas there is high competition between agriculture, gardening and human consumption for limited water resources (Fioretti et al., 2010; Palla et al., 2008; Van Mechelen et al., 2015). In such a scenario, those species with the ability to reduce their water consumption to a greater extent than the reduction of their biomass production (i.e., increasing the water use efficiency at the plant level) are potential candidates for green roof implementation. In the present study, the grass species *S. pungens* and *B. phoenicoides* showed the highest water consumption reduction between well-watered and severely stressed plants (60% and 55%, respectively). Moreover, *S. pungens* showed the highest WUE_T under severe water stress, which highlights its ability to produce biomass with low water consumption. It is noteworthy that *S. sediforme* showed the lowest water consumption across all treatments and also a low WUE_T , and its biomass production was also very low. These results agree with those of the studies that have reported *S. sediforme* as an interesting species for green roof implementation in water-limiting areas (Durhman et al., 2007; Monterusso et al.,

2005; Nektarios et al., 2014) but highlight the flaws of this species when carbon storage or reduction of CO₂ concentration in air are expected ecological benefits of green roofs. Similar results have been reported in several Crassulaceae species by Agra et al. (2017).

The ability of a plant species to produce biomass and to consume water partially depends on its photosynthetic capacity and stomatal conductance, respectively (Medrano et al., 2009). Moreover, reductions in stomatal conductance and net photosynthesis are early plant responses to water stress (Flexas and Medrano, 2002; Hsiao, 1973; Medrano et al 2003; Hipólito Medrano et al., 2009; Poni et al. 2009). In the present study, water stress affected biomass production and gas exchange in a similar way in most of the species (Tables 3 and 4). However, *B. phoenicoides* showed no significant decrease in net photosynthesis or stomatal conductance in water-stressed plants despite its biomass production being halved under those conditions. In fact, the net photosynthesis of well-watered *B. phoenicoides* was low compared to that of other Mediterranean grass species (Boden et al., 2013; Gulias et al. 2012; Xu et al., 2006); this finding suggests that *B. phoenicoides* plants could present obligate summer dormancy, which would lead to low photosynthetic activity despite high water availability and leaves that remain green. Some *Brachypodium* species have been reported to present summer dormancy (Holmes, 1996), which has been reported to be an interesting plant adaptation to summer drought in Mediterranean climate areas (Dvorak and Volder, 2010; Volaire et al., 1998; Volaire and Norton, 2006). From a green roof perspective, summer dormant grasses can be considered potentially interesting species because such traits allow the maintaining of green cover green during drought periods, i.e., with a good relative appearance and relatively low water consumption.

In addition to summer dormancy, C₄ photosynthetic metabolism is also an interesting adaptation to water-limiting environments (Gebauer. 1988; Dirks et al., 2016). *Sporobolus pungens* is a C₄ grass species (Echevarría et al., 1988) that usually grows in sandy areas close to the sea where salt and drought stresses make this kind of photosynthetic metabolism an interesting adaptation (MacIvor et al., 2013; Price et al., 2013). In the present study, *S. pungens* showed the highest water use efficiency at both the leaf and plant levels, highlighting the potential role of C₄ species in the green roof implementation in Mediterranean

and semi-arid areas. (Maclvor et al., 2013; Price et al., 2013; Dirks et al., 2016) However, low winter temperature limits the growth of C₄ species to a great extent, which suggests the importance of assessing the winter survival and spring regrowth ability of any C₄ species to be used in Mediterranean green roofs.

It is noteworthy that the studied species showed different patterns in their ability to maintain high relative water content (RWC) at midday. The two fleshy-leaf species, *S. sediforme* and *C. maritimum*, were able to maintain their RWC above or close to 80% at midday; This result is probably due to the thick cuticle and other leaf traits that reduce leaf water loss and that are usually found in fleshy leaves such as a low surface/volume ratio and a high accumulation of solutes in parenchyma cells (Benvenuti and Bacci, 2010; Blanusa et al., 2013; Farrell et al., 2013; Monterusso et al., 2005). *Brachypodium phoenicoides* plants were also able to maintain their RWC at midday above 80%, probably due to the summer dormancy behavior that leads to low stomatal conductance even under well-watered conditions. In contrast, *A. maritimus*, *S. pungens* and *L. virgatum* were able to maintain green and photosynthetically active leaves at midday RWC below 80%. Among these species, *S. pungens* in severe drought conditions (SD) showed the highest photosynthetic rate ($7 \mu\text{mol CO}_2 \text{ m}^2 \text{ s}^{-1}$) at 75% of midday RWC.

Most of the studied species were able to maintain good relative appearance (RA) (greater than 2 on a Likert scale between 1 and 3) regardless of water treatment; they accumulated relatively low senescent biomass and green biomass was predominant. In fact, the accumulation of senescent biomass was negatively correlated with RA (Table 5). However, some important differences in RA among the studied species were registered. *Asteriscus maritimus* showed the lowest RA across all water treatments; this species registered very low values (1.5) under severe water stress at the end of the experimental period. Moreover, this species is also limited by low winter temperatures (Ondoño et al., 2015; Sobre et al., 2001; Vestrella et al., 2015). This finding highlights the limits of *A. maritimus* for use in extensive green roofs under Mediterranean conditions in which RA is a key function. Despite the high esthetic interest of its flowering, high RA values would only be achieved during a relatively short period of time in the spring. Conversely, *S. sediforme* showed very high and constant RA regardless of water treatment as a result of its adaptation to survive under water-limiting conditions and also its

ability to flower in the summer. These results reinforce the usefulness of *S. sediforme* for use in Mediterranean and semi-arid areas when RA is the main functionality of a green roof. However, the *Sedum* genus is a very diverse group, and not all the *Sedum* species show good performance under water-limiting conditions (Butler and Orians, 2011; Monterusso et al., 2005; Nektarios et al., 2014; Starry et al., 2014; VanWoert et al., 2005). (Butler and Orians, 2011; Monterusso et al., 2005; Nektarios et al., 2014; Starry et al., 2014; VanWoert et al., 2005; Nagase and Dunnet, 2010)

The RA of *B. phoenicoides* and *C. maritimum* showed high values and only decreased under severe water stress at the end of the experimental period as a result of the high accumulation of senescent biomass in both species and the dramatic decrease in leaf area in *B. phoenicoides* plants. *Sporobolus pungens* and *L. virgatum* plants also showed a decrease in RA at the end of the experiment, although such a decrease was more related to turgor loss at midday in *L. virgatum* and to a leaf color change (from green to pale green) in *S. pungens*.

4.5 Conclusions

In conclusion, all the studied species showed interesting traits for extensive green roofs in water-limited areas such as those with Mediterranean and semi-arid climates. However, the observed differences among species suggest that each species would perform best depending on the prioritized ecosystem or social benefits of each green roof. *Sedum sediforme*, like other *Sedum* species, showed a high RA and a low WC regardless of water treatment, and its low biomass accumulation suggests low maintenance costs. However, the relatively slow growth ability and its low water consumption even under well-watered conditions preclude the use of this species when carbon storage and stormwater management are prioritized benefits. In contrast, the other studied species showed a lower RA than did *S. sediforme* but a higher ability to accumulate biomass and consume water. Among those species, *B. phoenicoides* and *L. virgatum* showed an interesting hybrid behavior by their ability to maintain relatively high RA values under water-limiting conditions during the summer and high biomass production and water consumption under well-watered conditions. *Sporobolus pungens* showed similar results as those species, but its C₄

metabolism would limit its ability to grow and consume water during late autumn and winter.

Capítulo V

EVALUACIÓN DEL RENDIMIENTO DE CINCO ESPECIES MEDITERRÁNEAS PARA LA OPTIMIZACIÓN DE LOS SERVICIOS ECOSISTÉMICOS DE CUBIERTAS AJARDINADAS BAJO DISPONIBILIDAD HÍDRICA LIMITADA

Performance evaluation of five Mediterranean species to optimize ecosystem services of green roofs under water-limited conditions

Keywords *Green roofs, Irrigation, Mediterranean climate, Native species, Water limitation, Esthetics, Water use, Water capture, Carbon sequestration.*

Abstract

Rapid urban growth in Mediterranean cities has become a serious environmental concern. Due to this expansion, which covers adjacent horizontal ground, a critical deficit of green areas has been increasing. Moreover, irrigation is considered an. The main objective of this study was to perform a long-term experiment to assess five Mediterranean species for extensive green roof implementation in Mediterranean-climate conditions. *Brachypodium phoenicoides*, *Crithmum maritimum*, *Limonium virgatum*, *Sedum sediforme* and *Sporobolus pungens* were grown in experimental modules under well-watered and water-limited conditions (irrigation at 50 % and 25 % ET₀, respectively). Plant growth and cover, relative appearance, color evolution and water use were determined periodically for two years. Shoot and root biomass were quantified at the end of the experimental period. The effects of the irrigation treatments and seasonal changes were assessed to identify the advantages and disadvantages of each species according to their environmental performance. All species survived and showed adequate esthetic performance and plant cover during the experiment. *S. sediforme* registered the lowest variation of relative appearance along the experiment, the highest biomass production and the lowest water consumption. Nevertheless, *B. phoenicoides* appeared to be an interesting alternative to *S. sediforme*, showing high esthetic performance and water consumption throughout the rainy season, suggesting a potential role of this species in stormwater regulation related with runoff reduction. *S. pungens* performed well in summer but presented poor esthetics during winter.

5.1 Introduction

The rapid increase of urban areas is considered one of the drivers of global climate change, with an important negative environmental impact. A lack of green infrastructures and an increase in impervious surfaces usually characterize urban

areas, and as a consequence, cities are affected by the heat island effect, environmental pollution and altered hydrology that adversely affect quality of life and human health (Carter and Rasmussen, 2005; Jarrett et al., 2007). Green infrastructures can attenuate those negative impacts since they are able to provide a wide range of supporting, cultural and ecosystem-regulating services (Bendel et al., 2010; Hien et al., 2003; Peng and Jim, 2013). Among the services, the implementation of extensive green roofs has been generally recognized as a practice that provides several ecosystem services in urban areas, including atmospheric and acoustic pollution reduction (Veisten et al., 2012; Yang et al., 2008), stormwater management in terms of runoff reduction and detention (Fioretti et al., 2010; Mentens et al., 2006; Palla et al., 2008; Schroll et al., 2011; Wolf and Lundholm, 2008), thermal regulation (Akbari and Konopacki, 2005; Butler and Orians, 2011; Getter et al., 2011; Hien et al., 2003; Lundholm et al., 2010; MacIvor and Lundholm, 2011; Peng and Jim, 2013; Santamouris et al., 2007), carbon sequestration (Kristin L Getter et al., 2009; Whittinghill et al., 2014), biodiversity improvement (Kadas 2006.; Dvorak and Volder, 2010; Oberndorfer et al., 2007) and esthetic and social benefits (Fernandez-Cañero et al., 2013; Jungels et al., 2013; Zielinski et al., 2012).

Extensive green roof infrastructure was quickly embraced in European and North American cities during the second half of the 20th Century due to the synergy between the abovementioned ecosystem and social services (Oberndorfer et al., 2007). However, green roofs have seldom been implemented in most semi-arid and Mediterranean-climate areas, where water scarcity is a highly limiting factor. In the sense used here, the Mediterranean climate is characterized by hot, dry summers and cool winters, a combination that limits perennial plant performance of C₄ and CAM drought-adapted species due to relatively low winter temperatures (Toscano et al., 2015), and of C₃ species due to summer drought (Bevilacqua et al., 2015; Durhman et al., 2007; Price et al., 2013). Moreover, plant selection is also constrained by the invasive ability of many ornamental and exotic species (Gritti et al., 2006), suggesting the importance of evaluating the performance of native species and focus in plant selection, since plant species largely determine the functionality and efficiency of extensive green roofs (Lundholm et al., 2010; Vijayaraghavan, 2016).

In a global scenario in which water resources are scarce, sustainable water management appears to be one of the most challenging issues in the near future. Direct human consumption, industry and irrigation of both agricultural fields and urban green areas compete for water resources, significantly limiting water availability for urban green areas, since this is usually considered a low-priority use. This situation is even more dramatic in semi-arid and Mediterranean-climate areas (Van Mechelen et al., 2015), suggesting the relevance of providing accurate data regarding the water requirements of different species to be used in urban green areas (García-Navarro et al., 2004). *Sedum* species are commonly used in green roof implementation due to the drought tolerance and high ground cover ability under water-limited conditions conferred by their leaf morphology, photosynthetic metabolism and high water-use efficiency (Blanusa et al., 2013; Monterusso et al., 2005).

In addition to water limitation during summer, oversaturation of urban drainage systems during the rainy season has been identified as a problem in many Mediterranean cities. The reduction and delay of runoff are considered potential green roof services (Fioretti et al., 2010; Jefferies and Doménech, n.d.; Palla et al., 2008). However, that service would be more efficiently performed if species with high water consumption abilities were used in green roof implementation suggesting a trade-off among vegetation functional goals, (Benvenuti and Bacci, 2010; Blanusa et al., 2013; Farrell et al., 2013; Maclvor and Lundholm, 2011; Maclvor et al., 2013, 2011; Eksi, 2017; Schweitzer and Erell, 2014) since those species that are able to consume large amounts of water usually show low performance under water-limited conditions (Durhman et al., 2007; VanWoert et al., 2005). Nevertheless, some herbs and grasses, usually high water consumers, have reported high survival rates and optimal recovery after a drought period. Those species have shown a number of responses to water stress such as root growth increase, leaf size reduction, high stomatal response and isohydric behavior (Farrell et al., 2013; Maclvor et al., 2013; Maclvor and Lundholm, 2011; Nagase and Dunnett, 2010). However, in addition to plant species traits, the irrigation regime and the substrate characteristics would also determine to a great extent the ability of a green roof system to reduce stormwater runoff and delay peak flows (Fioretti et al., 2010; Palla et al., 2008; Wolf and Lundholm, 2008).

The esthetic value is also recognized as an ecosystem benefit provided by green roofs (Bendell et al., 2010; Fernandez-Cañero et al., 2013), though it is rarely emphasized, and very little information is known about this benefit. Several studies have suggested that future research on plant selection should consider and better quantify plant architecture and form, flowering length, color and greening variation during the year and biomass production, and how water supply and other management techniques affect vegetation and green roof performance (Benvenuti and Bacci, 2010; Dunnett et al., 2008; Durhman et al., 2007; Emilsson, 2008; Fernandez-Cañero et al., 2013; Lundholm et al., 2010; MacIvor et al., 2013; Monterusso et al., 2005; Nagase and Dunnett, 2010).

In this context, identifying species able to withstand drought with an optimal appearance and growth but also capable of achieving high water consumption during the rainy season in order to enhance runoff reduction would greatly improve green roof functionality in Mediterranean-climate areas. The present experimental and long-term study aims to study the performance of 5 Mediterranean species in experimental extensive green roofs under two different water regimes. The following specific objectives are addressed: i) to study the ability of 5 Mediterranean species to cope with water limited condition by determining plant cover, biomass accumulation, relative appearance and coloration; and ii) to determine the water use of those species in order to evaluate their potential uses in stormwater management and estimate their water-use efficiency under extensive green roof conditions.

5.2 Material and Methods

Plant material and experimental design

The experiment was performed at the University of the Balearic Islands, Spain, (West Mediterranean Basin, 39°38' N, 2°38' E) at 80 m a.s.l., where the mean annual rainfall is 427 mm and the annual mean temperature is 17°C (AEMET, 2015).

Five Mediterranean species, *Brachypodium phoenicoides*, *Crithmum maritimum*, *Limonium virgatum*, *Sedum sediforme* and *Sporobolus pungens* (Table 1), were considered in this study. These species were considered potentially suitable for

extensive green roof conditions because they grow in natural habitats characterized by shallow soils with low organic matter content, high solar radiation and extreme temperature, conditions that can be similar to those in extensive green roofs. Moreover, perenniality, low biomass production, high germination rates and potential esthetic value were also considered as criteria for selection.

Table 5.1. Family name, life form, natural habitat and season of propagule collection of the plant species included in this study.

| Species | Family | Life form | Natural habitat | Seed or propagule collection season |
|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------|--|--|
| <i>Brachypodium phoenicoides</i> | Poaceae | Hemicryptophyte | Dry grasslands and pine forest margins | July and August |
| <i>Crithmum maritimum</i> | Umbelliferae | Chamaephyte | Coastal zones | September and October |
| <i>Limonium virgatum</i> | Plumbaginaceae | Chamaephyte | Coastal salty soils | September to November |
| <i>Sporobolus pungens</i> | Poaceae | Geophyte | Coastal sandy soils | July |
| <i>Sedum sediforme</i> | Crassulaceae | Chamaephyte | Rock crevices | August to October |

Experimental modules of 0.75 m x 0.75 m and 0.15 m depth were installed one meter above the soil. The modules were filled with commercial green roof layers from the top to the bottom as follows: 1) 0.12 m of substrate composed of a recycled product based on specially processed clay tiles with 10.6 % organic material. This substrate is considered suitable for extensive green roofs due to its stable structure, high permeability and aeration capacity (Barco, 2008). The bulk density is 1120 g/l (ZinCo, 2012). Soil water content at field capacity (27.9 %) was determined by gravimetric methods (watering to saturation and allowing 12 h of drainage and 48 h of drying at 105°C); 2) a filter sheet of Geotextile thermally strengthened polypropylene (Filter system SF; ZinCo GmbH); 3) a drain system of thermoformed recycled polyolefin (Floradrain FD 25-E, ZinCo GmbH) with a water storage capacity of 3 mm; 4) a protection mat of recycled synthetic fibers made of polyester (Protection mat SSM 45; ZinCo GmbH) with a water storage capacity of 5 mm (ZinCo, 2012).

Seeds were germinated in seed benches with horticultural substrate (Prohumin Substrate Klasmann-Deilmann) between October and November 2012 under greenhouse conditions. Seedlings were grown under those conditions until February 2013, when they were placed outdoors to facilitate plant acclimation. In mid-March, after 45 days outdoors, 9 plants of the same species were planted in each module (16 plants per m²).

To ensure plant establishment, all modules were kept at field capacity from transplantation to June 2013, when two water treatments were imposed according to the average species coefficient (Ks), estimated to be 0.5 (Costello et al., 2000): irrigation with 50 % and 25 % of potential evapotranspiration (ETP). Following Costello et al. (2000), the irrigation with 50 % ETP can be considered the well-watered (WW) condition, since this provides 100 % of the estimated water requirements, and the irrigation with 25 % ETP can be considered a water-limited (WL) condition, since this provides 50 % of plant water requirements. ETP was calculated from data recorded by a meteorological station (Meteodata 3000, Geónica SA, Madrid, Spain) at the experimental site following the Penman-Monteith equation (Fao, 1990). The experimental period lasted from June 2013 to June 2015. Three replicates per species and water treatment were considered. To assess the effect of the presence of vegetation in green roofs, and for a better approximation to water consumption considering direct evapotranspiration from soil, three unplanted modules per water treatment were also considered.

Plant performance measurements

Plant cover, relative appearance and biomass

Soil plant cover, plant height, coloration and relative appearance were monitored once per month during the experiment, from July 2013 to July 2015. To quantify the soil vegetation cover, a Digital Image Analysis (DIA) method was performed on images taken with an Olympus SP-800UZ digital camera (Olympus Imaging Corp. 2010, Tokyo, Japan). To minimize shadow effects, the pictures were taken around midday (from 11:00 to 15:00 hours local time) and from a perpendicular position one meter above each module. Two digital images were recorded for each module, and plant cover was estimated in each picture using image analysis software (Greenpix, developed by the Institut de Recerca i Tecnologia

Agroalimentàries - IRTA). The pictures were saved in JPG format and resized to ensure a uniform analysis (Vestrella et al,2015). Hue is defined as "the degree to which a stimulus can be described as similar to or different from stimuli that are described as red, green, blue, and yellow". Hue range is considered a color-order system divided to meet the demand for descriptions of color appearance (Chan, 1994), The assessment of coloring differences between species and irrigation treatments was possible since the whole hue range (0 to 180) was considered for each image and it allows the division of pixels into three ranges to distinguish green, yellow and brown colors (5-30, 40-70 and 70-180 respectively), calculating the percentage of each color portion in relation to the total image pixels. Plant cover was considered to be the sum of these three ranges. The 30-40 hue range was not included because it was coincident with the hue of the growing media; in this way, possible mistakes derived from overlapping colors were avoided.

To perform the esthetic evaluation, a methodology was adapted from previous studies based on color, number of leaves, health score, stress status, plant survival and flowering (Monterusso et al., 2005; Nagase and Dunnett, 2010; Butler and Colin, 2011). Relative appearance (RA) was evaluated as a mean of the monthly estimation of four esthetic parameters: plant and leaf color, plant shape, plant vigor, and flowering (Table 2).

The total plant dry biomass (TDM) of each module was estimated at the end of the experiment in July 2015. TDM was separated into aerial biomass (ADM) and root biomass (RDM). Root biomass was separated from the soil using a hose pipe and a sieve to reduce biomass loss as much as possible. All fresh root and aerial biomass was weighed immediately after sampling, and a subsample from each module was weighed and oven-dried at 70°C for 72 h in order to calculate biomass water content and estimate dry biomass. Carbon accumulation was calculated by multiplying dry biomass weight by conversion factors of 0.42 and 0.36 for aerial and root biomass, respectively (Moretto et al., 2001).

Table 5.2. Plant traits and the Likert scale considered in the esthetic evaluation (relative appearance) of the plants.

| Value scale | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|-------------|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Plant Color | Optimal color richness | Acceptable color richness | Senescent (brown leaves) |

| | | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Flowering | High density | Low density | Absence |
| Plant Vigor | Optimal (turgid leaves) | Adequate (few dehydrated leaves) | Inadequate (several dehydrated leaves) |
| Plant Shape | Optimal (compact) | Adequate (partially open) | Inadequate (formless) |

Water consumption

The water intake of each module was calculated as the sum of irrigation water plus precipitation. The drip irrigation system was checked every month to detect possible variations during the experiment. Drained water was collected in a plastic storage tank placed just under the drainage hole of each module and weighted after each precipitation event. The water consumption of each module was calculated using equation 1:

$$\text{Eq. (5.1) Module Water Consumption} = \text{Module Water Intake} - \text{Module Drained Water}$$

To account for direct substrate evaporation, the water consumption of the bare-soil module was considered as a proxy for direct soil evaporation. The adjusted module water consumption was estimated following equation 2:

$$\text{Eq. (5.2) Real Module Water Consumption} = \text{Module Water Consumption} - (\text{Module Water Consumption from bare soil module} * (1 - (\% \text{ of plant cover per module}/100)))$$

Substrate data

A sample of the substrate was collected prior to module installation and analyzed to determine its initial nutrient content. At the end of the experiment, substrate samples were taken at depths of 3-10 cm from each module. Substrate analysis was performed according to the official methods of analysis (Volume III) (MAPA, 1994) for soil organic matter, cationic exchange capacity, total carbonate, soil pH and conductivity, total nitrogen, Olsen Phosphorus and interchangeable calcium, potassium and sodium determination.

Statistical analysis

The General Linear Model analysis of all measured parameters was performed in accordance with a factorial experiment using a completely randomized design by the SPSS 19.0 software package (SPSS, Chicago, IL USA). The General Linear Model for repeated measurements was used to evaluate differences in those parameters with data collected monthly, including: plant cover, color (green, yellow and brown were analyzed separately) and relative appearance, and considering the five species and two water treatments as independent variables. Results from first and second year were analyzed separately and as a whole in order to obtain more information. Significant differences between species were revealed by Duncan's post hoc analyses (at a p -value < 0.05).

The Multivariate General Linear Model was used to evaluate water consumption data separately for each season, and in this case, bare soil modules were also included in the analysis. Significant differences between species were revealed by Duncan's post hoc analyses (at a p -value < 0.05).

5.3 Results

Meteorological (temperature and precipitation) conditions during the experimental period were recorded daily, and the averages are shown in Figure 1. The study period showed typical Mediterranean conditions with dry and hot summers, cool and wet winters, and a highly irregular precipitation pattern (Fig. 5.1).

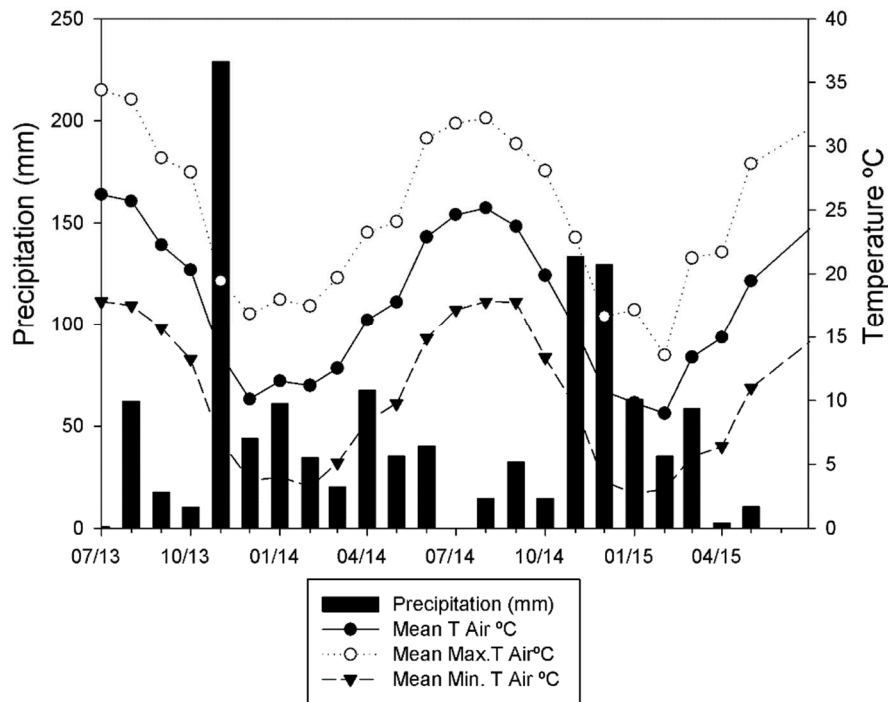


Figure 5.1. Meteorological data during the experimental period (July 2013 to June 2015). Monthly precipitation (mm) and maximum, minimum and mean air temperatures (°C) at the experimental field are shown.

The development of total plant cover over the two years was high in all species and treatments. However, the plant cover significantly differed among species and water treatments. *Sedum sediforme* showed the highest plant cover with a mean of 90.04 %, and *S. pungens* and *L. virgatum* showed the lowest values with 81.31 % and 81.64 %, respectively. The differences were higher in the second year than in the first one, when no significant differences were observed among species. Water availability affected plant cover to a different extent in each species; only *B. phoenicoides* and *C. maritimum* showed a significant decrease in the % of plant cover under water-limited conditions. Regardless of water treatment, *B. phoenicoides*, *S. sediforme* and *S. pungens* reached 100 % plant cover at the end of the experimental period (Fig. 5.2A-E).

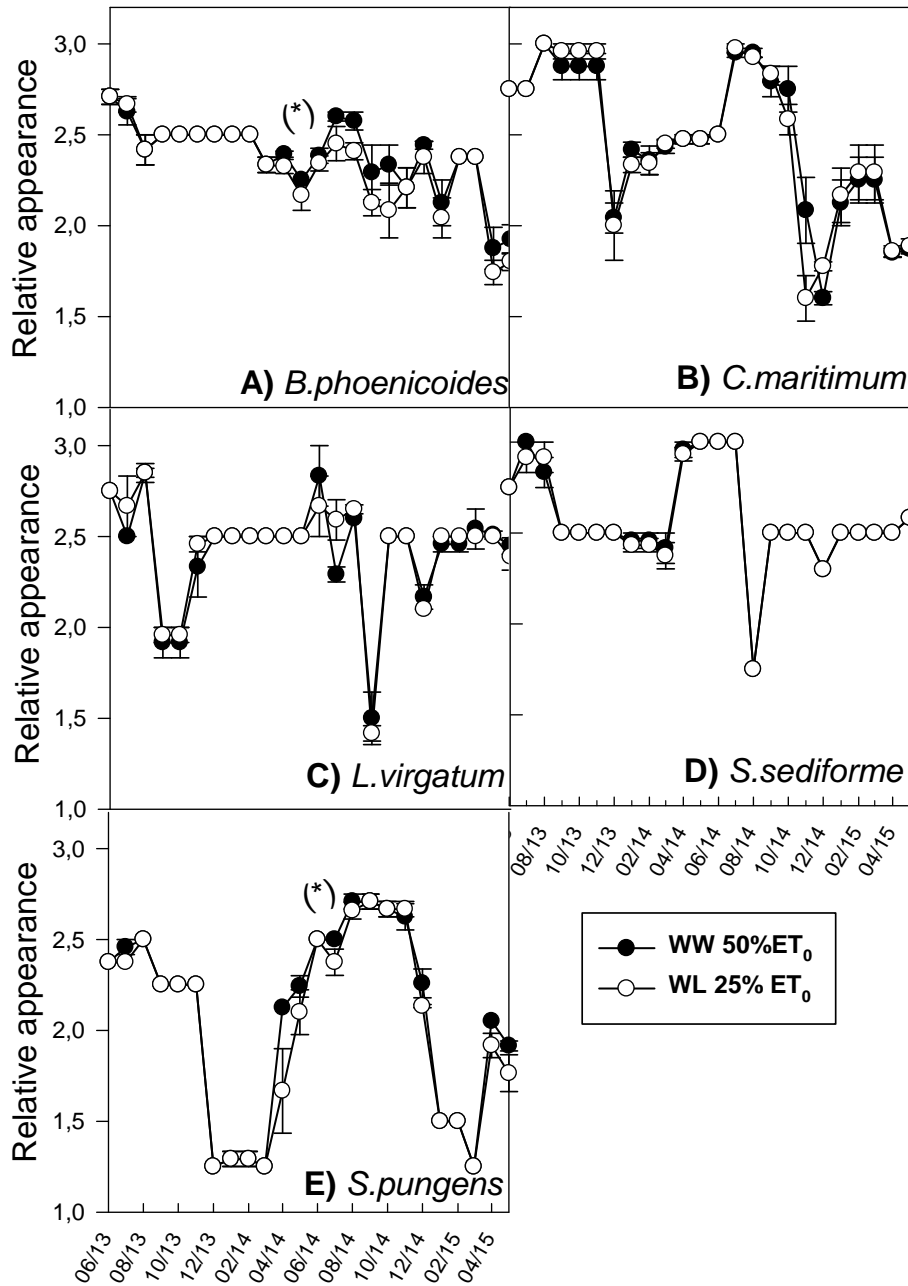


Figure 5.2. Evolution of the percentage of soil plant cover (%) over two years in well-watered (WW) and water-limited (WL) treatments. Values are the means \pm s.e. of monthly measurements using digital images of modules (3 replicates for each water treatment and species). (*) Denotes significant differences at $p < 0.05$.

The percentage of the three colors analyzed throughout the experiment (yellow, green and brown) significantly varied in the experiment (Duncan test, $p < 0.005$). Taking into consideration all vegetated modules and both water treatments, the percentage of yellow cover was higher than that of green or brown for all species

except for *S. sediforme*. The two years mean yellow cover area varied from 32.07 % to 54.23 %. In particular, modules covered with *B. phoenicoides* and *S. pungens* showed the highest means values of yellow covered area in WW conditions, 52.79 % and 50.79 %, respectively, and in WL conditions, 53.54 % and 54.23 %, respectively. *B. phoenicoides* modules showed the highest yellow cover during the two years, in both water treatments, with exception of the second year, when *S. pungens* yellow cover was higher for both WW and WL. A higher proportion of green covered area was registered in the *S. sediforme* modules than in the other species in both water treatments and during the whole period (51.93 % in WW and 49.77 % in WL). During the two experimental years, brown covered area ranged from 5.88 % to 19.27 % in WW modules and from 6.89 % to 23.61 % in WL. Differences of brown cover area were statistically significant between species: the highest percentage was observed in *L. virgatum* modules (19.27 and 23.61 % in WW and WL, respectively) (Fig.5.3).

The effect of water availability on plant color differed among species ($p < 0.005$) (Fig. 5.3). The green cover proportion decreased significantly in both *B. phoenicoides* and *C. maritimum* when plants were grown under WL conditions, whereas an increase of brown cover was observed in the modules with *L. virgatum* and *C. maritimum*. By contrast, the percentage of yellow cover was not significantly affected by water availability in the five studied species.

The percentage of the three colors differed significantly among seasons; in particular the percentage of green cover significantly decreased during the summer of 2014 in all species and in both treatments, except in *C. maritimum* and *S. pungens* under WW conditions. *Crithmum maritimum* and *S. sediforme* showed a higher yellow cover during summer than in the other seasons in both water treatments because of flowering, so these increases cannot be attributed to an increase in senescent biomass. In contrast, *S. pungens* showed a persistent yellow cover regardless the season, with a dominant color ranging between 40 and 70 hue during the whole experimental period. *L. virgatum* showed a significant increase of brown cover during the first winter as a consequence of an increment of leaves color change from green to brown or to red specially during winter and spring (Fig.5.3).

Relative appearance (RA), as previously mentioned involves the valuation of color, flowering, vigor and shape (Table 5.2), this parameter ranged between 1.2 and 3.0 throughout the experiment and significantly differed among species and treatments ($p < 0.005$) (Fig.5.4). *Sedum sediforme* showed the highest relative appearance regardless of water treatment, with values above 2.0 except in summer 2014. In contrast, *S. pungens* showed the lowest RA, with values below 1.5 recorded in winter. Water-limited conditions significantly decreased the RA of the two grasses, *B. phoenicoides* and *S. pungens*. In contrast, *C. maritimum*, *L. virgatum* and *S. sediforme* showed no significant differences in RA between water treatments (Fig. 5.4).

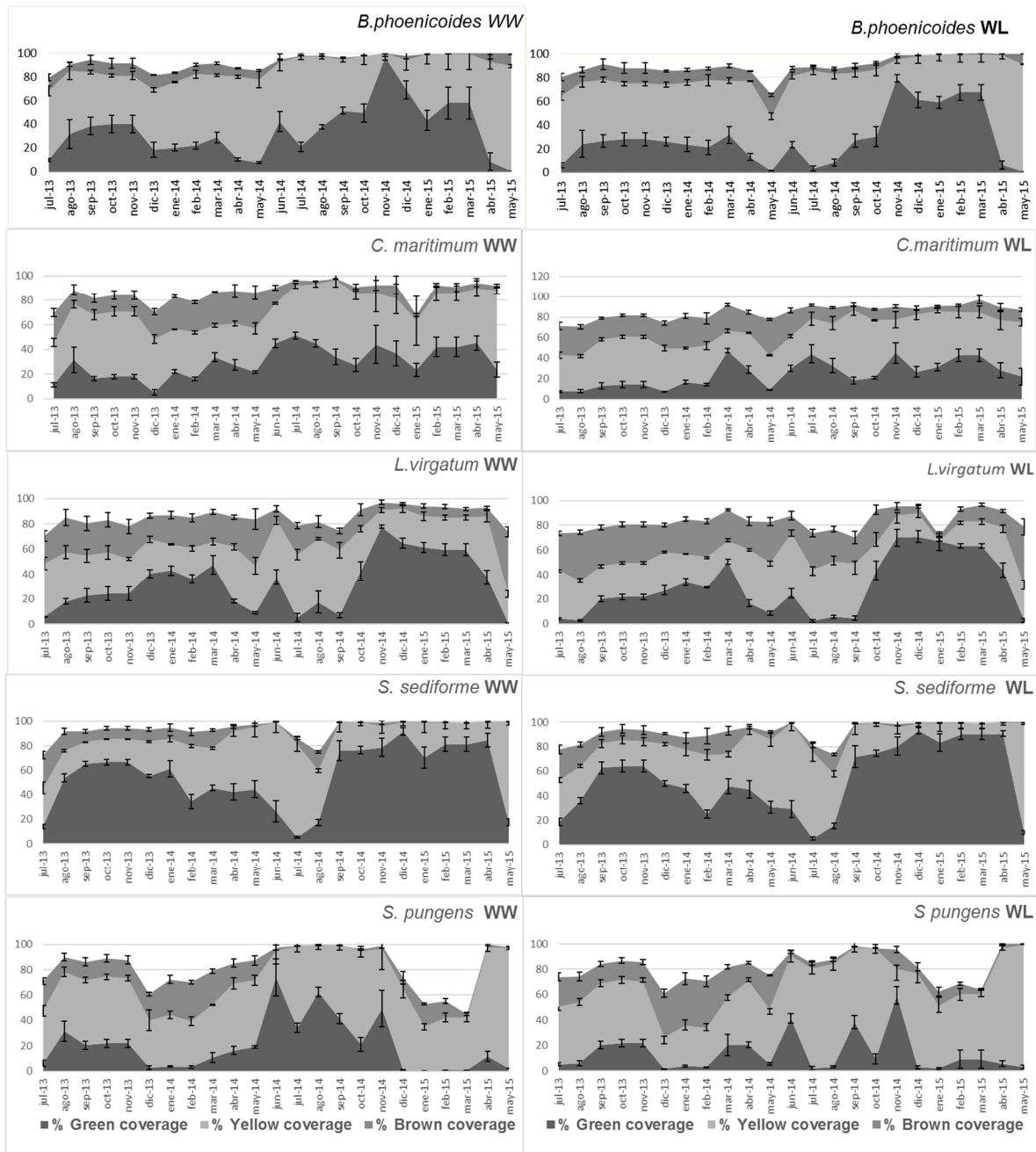


Figure 5.3. Evolution of color distribution (%) over two years in well-watered (WW) and water-limited (WL) treatments. Values are means \pm S.E. (standard error) of monthly measurements using digital images of modules (3 replicates for each water treatment and species).

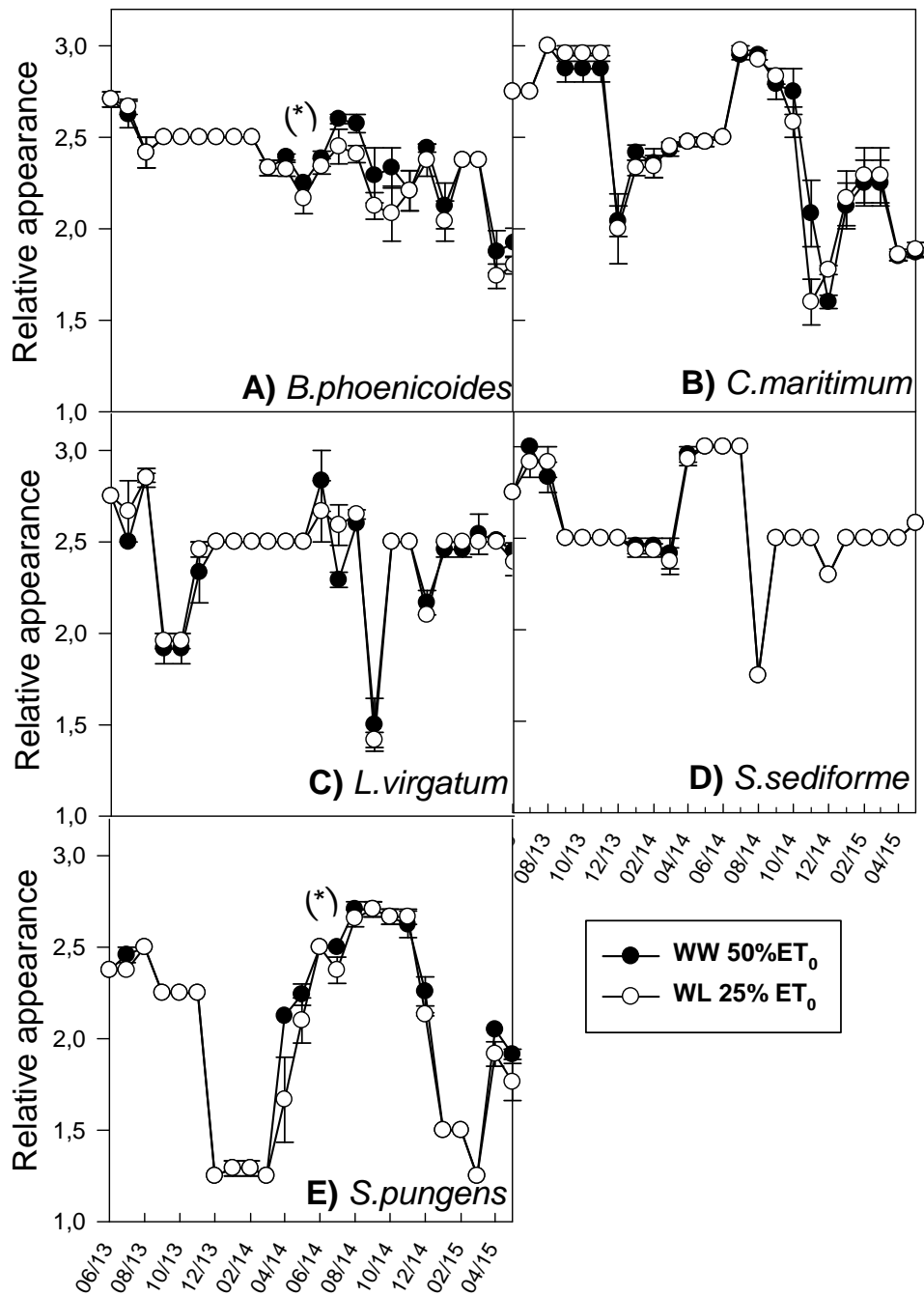


Figure 5.4. Relative appearance evolution over two years in well-watered (WW) and water-limited (WL) treatments. Values are means \pm s.e. of monthly measurements using digital images of modules (3 replicates for each water treatment and species). (*) denotes a significant water treatment effect within each species.

Water consumption

The water consumption (WC) significantly varied among seasons. As could be expected, when all species and treatments were considered together, the highest water consumption was registered in summer, with $1.59 \text{ lm}^{-2}\text{d}^{-1}$ and $1.93 \text{ lm}^{-2}\text{d}^{-1}$ in 2013 and 2014, respectively. In contrast, the lowest WC was observed in autumn, with $0.97 \text{ lm}^{-2}\text{d}^{-1}$ and $1.76 \text{ lm}^{-2}\text{d}^{-1}$ in 2013 and 2014, respectively. Considering the whole experimental period, WC did not significantly differ among species under WW conditions. The WC among species under WL conditions ranged between 1.26 and $1.01 \text{ lm}^{-2}\text{d}^{-1}$ in *B. phoenicoides* and *S. pungens*, respectively. It is noticeable that the highest water consumption under both water treatments was found in the unplanted modules (Table 6.3).

In contrast to the few significant differences observed in the general trends, when WC of each species and treatment is analyzed season by season, several differences are revealed (Table 6.3). Under WW conditions, *B. phoenicoides* and *C. maritimum* showed the highest WC and *S. sediforme* the lowest in summer 2013 and 2014. The WC in spring differed between years, with *C. maritimum* showing the highest WC in both years and *S. sediforme* and *B. phoenicoides* showing the lowest ones in 2014 and 2015, respectively. In contrast, the autumn and winter WC pattern was clearly different to those described for summer and spring; *S. pungens* was the lowest water consumer in winter in both years, while *B. phoenicoides* and *S. sediforme* showed the highest WC in winter 2013/14 and 2014/15, respectively. In autumn, no significant differences were recorded in WC among species either in 2013 or in 2014.

As expected, water consumption was higher in WW than in WL; on average, WW plants increased their WC by 319.0 lm^{-2} (27.94 %) when compared to WL plants. The effect of water availability on WC differed among species. *S. sediforme* showed a significant decrease in WC under WL conditions only in spring and summer 2014 and spring 2015, while *B. phoenicoides* and *C. maritimum* significantly decreased their WC with water availability in all seasons except in autumn and winter 2014/15 (Table 6.3). *Limonium virgatum* and *S. pungens* showed an intermediate pattern. It is noteworthy that although the WC of *S. pungens* always tended to be low in winter, this trend significantly decreased in WL when compared to WW conditions

Table 5.3. Water consumption of the studied species under two water treatments: well-watered (WW) and water-limited (WL). Values are means \pm s.e. (n = 3). Different lowercase and capital letters denote significant differences among species within WW and WL treatments, respectively, at $p < 0.05$. (*) denotes significant differences of WL with respect to WW at $p \leq 0.05$ within each species. The values of the unplanted modules represent direct evaporation from the substrate.

| Species | Water consumption (l m ⁻² d ⁻¹) | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | 2013 | | 2014 | | | 2015 | | | 2013-2015 |
| | Summer | Autumn | Winter | Spring | Summer | Autumn | Winter | Spring | |
| <i>B. phoenicoides</i> WW | 2.17 \pm 0.14 ^a | 1.11 \pm 0.03 ^a | 1.14 \pm 0.02 ^{bc} | 1.84 \pm 0.08 ^{ab} | 2.66 \pm 0.02 ^a | 1.54 \pm 0.46 ^a | 1.25 \pm 0.33 ^a | 0.97 \pm 0.06 ^c | 1.6 \pm 0.1 ^{ab} |
| <i>B. phoenicoides</i> WL | 1.45 \pm 0.08 ^{*AB} | 0.75 \pm 0.02 ^{*B} | 0.82 \pm 0.05 ^{*BC} | 1.41 \pm 0.08 ^{*AB} | 1.43 \pm 0.04 ^{*B} | 2.22 \pm 0.46 ^A | 1.29 \pm 0.17 ^A | 0.64 \pm 0.04 ^{*C} | 1.26 \pm 0.07 ^{AB} |
| <i>C. maritimum</i> WW | 2.03 \pm 0.17 ^a | 1.13 \pm 0.05 ^a | 0.93 \pm 0.02 ^{de} | 2.08 \pm 0.06 ^{ab} | 2.64 \pm 0.00 ^a | 1.63 \pm 0.26 ^a | 1.21 \pm 0.1 ^{ab} | 1.47 \pm 0.04 ^{ab} | 1.65 \pm 0.03 ^{ab} |
| <i>C. maritimum</i> WL | 1.23 \pm 0.07 ^{*ABC} | 0.81 \pm 0.03 ^{*B} | 0.71 \pm 0.03 ^{*CD} | 1.46 \pm 0.08 ^{*AB} | 1.47 \pm 0.03 ^{*B} | 1.85 \pm 0.22 ^A | 1.12 \pm 0.15 ^A | 0.81 \pm 0.03 ^{*B} | 1.19 \pm 0.04 ^{*BC} |
| <i>L. virgatum</i> WW | 1.85 \pm 0.06 ^{ab} | 1.07 \pm 0.07 ^a | 1.23 \pm 0.03 ^{ab} | 2.24 \pm 0.12 ^{ab} | 2.14 \pm 0.11 ^b | 2.11 \pm 0.34 ^a | 1.38 \pm 0.22 ^a | 1.25 \pm 0.04 ^b | 1.76 \pm 0.07 ^{ab} |
| <i>L. virgatum</i> WL | 1.29 \pm 0.05 ^{*ABC} | 0.8 \pm 0.09 ^B | 0.82 \pm 0.01 ^{*BC} | 1.37 \pm 0.08 ^{*AB} | 1.19 \pm 0.04 ^{*C} | 1.3 \pm 0.15 ^A | 1.12 \pm 0.06 ^A | 0.77 \pm 0.04 ^{*B} | 1.09 \pm 0.05 ^{*BC} |
| <i>S. sediforme</i> WW | 1.36 \pm 0.17 ^b | 0.99 \pm 0.03 ^a | 1.03 \pm 0.05 ^{cd} | 1.75 \pm 0.08 ^b | 1.78 \pm 0.08 ^c | 2.18 \pm 0.49 ^a | 1.45 \pm 0.13 ^a | 1.40 \pm 0.18 ^{ab} | 1.14 \pm 0.11 ^b |
| <i>S. sediforme</i> WL | 1.26 \pm 0.02 ^{ABC} | 0.9 \pm 0.02 ^B | 0.89 \pm 0.02 ^B | 1.4 \pm 0.03 ^{*AB} | 1.38 \pm 0.02 ^{*B} | 1.26 \pm 0.41 ^A | 1.39 \pm 0.04 ^A | 0.90 \pm 0.02 ^{*A} | 1.17 \pm 0.05 ^{BC} |
| <i>S. pungens</i> WW | 1.79 \pm 0.22 ^{ab} | 1.04 \pm 0.06 ^a | 0.81 \pm 0.06 ^e | 2.04 \pm 0.23 ^{ab} | 2.63 \pm 0.01 ^a | 1.63 \pm 0.37 ^a | 0.84 \pm 0.20 ^b | 1.39 \pm 0.08 ^{ab} | 1.53 \pm 0.03 ^{ab} |
| <i>S. pungens</i> WL | 1.13 \pm 0.14 ^C | 0.79 \pm 0.07 ^B | 0.59 \pm 0.04 ^{*D} | 1.26 \pm 0.16 ^{*B} | 1.47 \pm 0.02 ^{*B} | 1.25 \pm 0.37 ^A | 0.70 \pm 0.21 ^B | 0.79 \pm 0.04 ^{*B} | 1.01 \pm 0.11 ^{*C} |
| Unplanted WW | 1.87 \pm 0.05 ^a | 1.12 \pm 0.07 ^a | 1.34 \pm 0.07 ^a | 2.26 \pm 0.22 ^a | 2.72 \pm 0.01 ^a | 2.26 \pm 0.10 ^a | 1.08 \pm 0.1 ^{ab} | 1.54 \pm 0.03 | 1.78 \pm 0.05 ^a |
| Unplanted WL | 1.62 \pm 0.08 ^{*A} | 1.12 \pm 0.10 ^A | 1.34 \pm 0.09 ^A | 1.66 \pm 0.08 ^A | 1.6 \pm 0.01 ^{*A} | 1.91 \pm 0.11 ^A | 1.23 \pm 0.13 ^A | 0.90 \pm 0.01 ^{*A} | 1.43 \pm 0.06 ^A |

Biomass production and carbon sequestration

Total dry biomass (TDM) harvested after two years significantly differed among species and showed a similar pattern in both WW and WL plants, *S. sediforme* registering the highest TDM and *C. maritimum* the lowest one. The TDM values ranged between 3.96 kgm⁻² and 0.65 kgm⁻² for WW *S. sediforme* and WL *C. maritimum*, respectively (Fig.5.5A). Aerial dry biomass (ADM) showed the same pattern as that reported for TDM (Fig. 5.5B). In contrast, the root dry biomass (RDM) differences among species were lower than those reported in TDM and ADM. Moreover, the *C. maritimum* and *B. phoenicoides* modules accumulated the highest amount of RDM under WW and WL conditions, respectively. *S. sediforme* was the species showing the lowest RDM regardless of water treatment (Fig. 5.5C).

The effect of water availability on TDM, ADM and RDM differed among species. As a general trend, biomass accumulation was lower in WL than in WW plants (Fig.5.5 A-C). However, TDM was significantly reduced under WL conditions only in *C. maritimum* and *L. virgatum* (51.37 % and 40.01 %, respectively) and ADM only in *L. virgatum* (45.98 %). The reduction in RDM under WL conditions was significant only in *C. maritimum* (63.14 %). *Sedum sediforme* and *B. phoenicoides* showed the lowest TDM reductions under WL conditions, with 14.45 % and 18.20 %, respectively.

The carbon sequestration capacity was estimated considering both above- and below-ground biomass (Fig. 5.6), and thus it mimics the TDM results. Considering an average of WW and WL, *S. sediforme* was the species with the highest carbon sequestration capacity, 1.57 and 1.35 kg C m⁻² in WW and WL treatments, respectively. *Crithmum maritimum* exhibited the lowest carbon sequestration, with a mean of 0.40 kg C m⁻² considering both water treatments. *Limonium virgatum* and *S. pungens* showed significantly higher C sequestration, 0.85 kg C m⁻² and 0.75 kg C m⁻², respectively, than *B. phoenicoides* (0.54 kg C m⁻²).

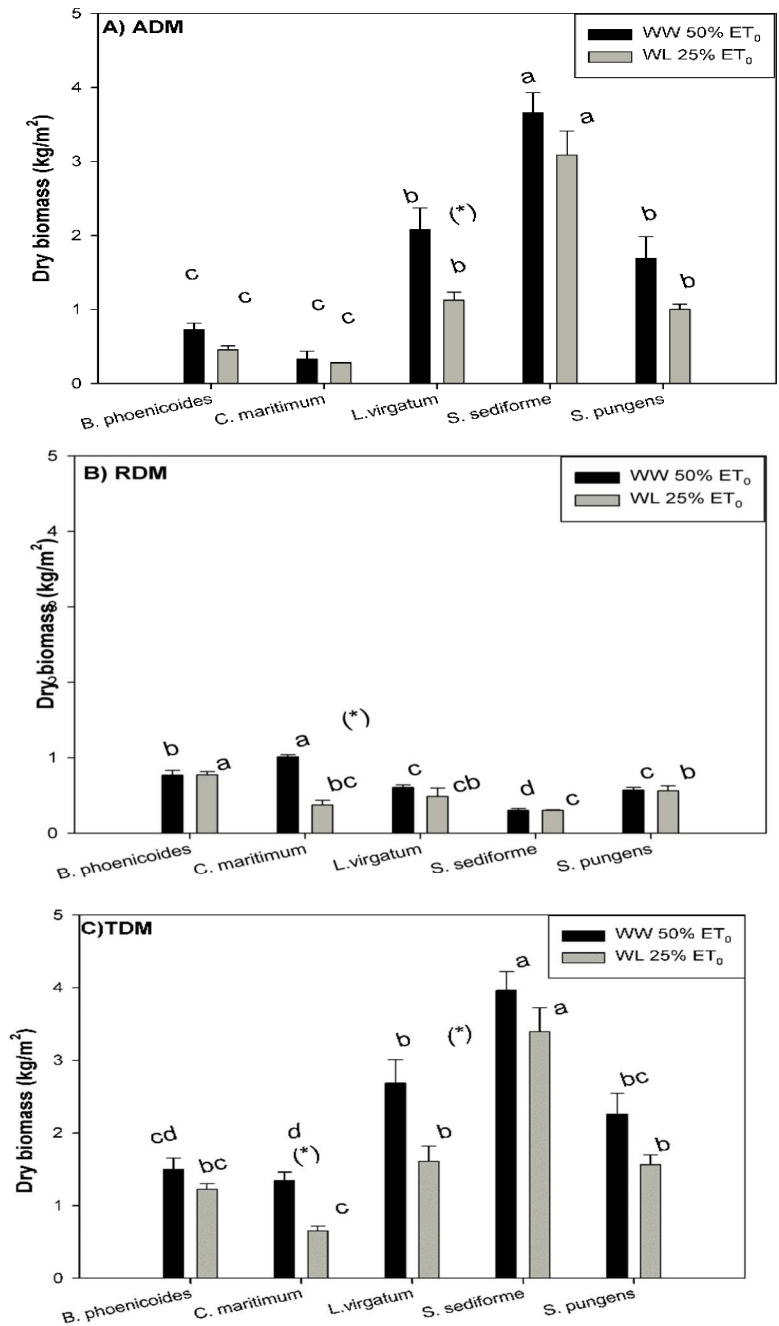


Figure 5.5. Biomass production per module A) Aerial Dry Mass (ADM); B) Root Dry Mass (RDM); and C) Total Dry Mass (TDM) under well-watered (WW) and water-limited (WL) treatments. Values are means \pm s.e. of 3 replicates. Lowercase letters denote significant differences among species within each water treatment at $p < 0.05$. (*) denotes a significant water treatment effect within each specie at $p < 0.05$.

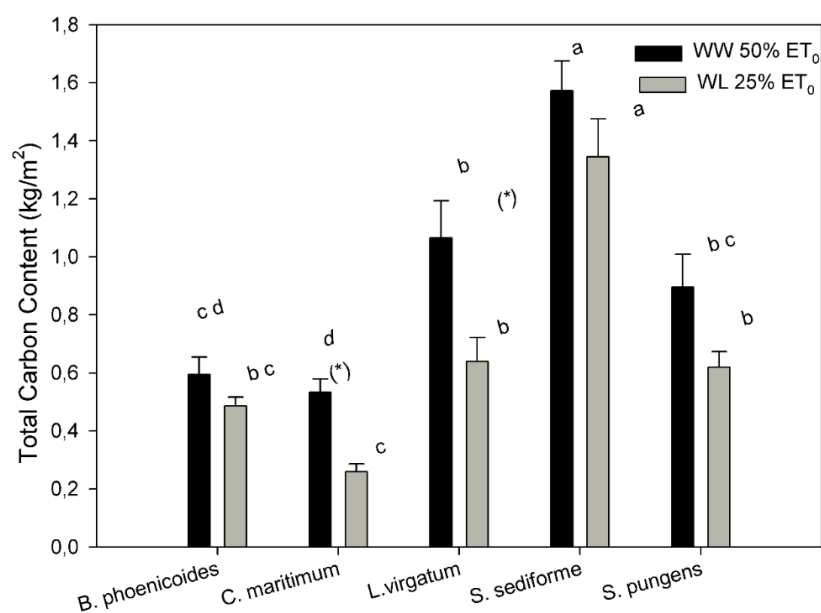


Figure 5.6. Carbon content estimation (kg C m⁻²) under well-watered (WW) and water-limited (WL) treatments. Values are means ± s.e. of 3 replicates. Lowercase letters denote significant differences among species within each water treatment at p < 0.05. (*) denotes a significant water treatment effect within each species at p < 0.05.

5.4. Discussion

In this work, we assessed the performance of five Mediterranean species under experimental extensive green roof conditions throughout two years. We focused on the contribution of each species to three common ecosystem and social services – esthetic interest, stormwater management and carbon sequestration – as well as on the effect of water availability on plant performance. *Sedum sediforme*, a species commonly used in extensive green roof implementation and native to the Mediterranean Basin, performed as the best species, showing a relatively high esthetic interest during the two years, the highest biomass accumulation and the ability to adapt its water consumption to water availability. The other studied species also performed well and can be suggested as alternative species to the ubiquitous use of *Sedum sp.* The advantages and disadvantages of each species are discussed in this section, taking into consideration their environmental characteristics and social interest values.

All the species showed a soil cover above 70 % during most of the two years regardless of water availability, which suggests both that the planting density (16 plants m⁻²) was high enough to attain a high cover in a short period of time (just two months after planting in all modules) and that the studied species have a high ability to cover the soil. Indeed, the two grasses, *B. phoenicoides* and *S. pungens*, showed the ability to form rhizomes or stolons. However, *S. pungens* was able to form more and longer rhizomes and stolons than *B. phoenicoides*, showing a high capacity to colonize nearby modules, which could increase the maintenance needs of small green roofs. *B. phoenicoides* has been described as a bunch-forming grass with the ability to colonize the soil by producing short rhizomes (Caturla et al., 2000). *Sedum sediforme* has a creeping growth behavior with a high ability to produce adventitious roots (Maclvor et al., 2013; Lee et al., 1994), which represents an efficient way to spread over the soil, increasing water and nutrient uptake (Nektarios et al., 2014; Schroll et al., 2011).

Despite the generally high soil cover observed throughout the experiment, *S. pungens* showed a significant decrease in winter (Fig.5.2) as a consequence of its C₄ photosynthetic metabolism (Toscano et al., 2015), which would limit its ability to grow even at moderately low temperatures. Moreover, this species showed a significant increase in brown- and yellow-colored biomass during winter (Fig.5.3), which would explain the lower RA registered by *S. pungens* in winter (Fig.5.3). Those results suggest that the potential use of C₄ species in urban greening in Mediterranean-climate areas due to their high ability to grow under drought and salt stress would be limited by their capacity to survive during winter and their regrowth in early spring, which would determine the length and intensity of their dormancy period.

Sedum sediforme and *C. maritimum* also showed a decrease in RA and soil cover after summer 2014 as a consequence of a heavy aphid attack at the end of the flowering period; the infestation led to the necessity of removing the flower stalks, which had accounted for a high percentage of the biomass covering the soil. The aphids did not cause any serious problems for plant survival, but they significantly decreased the RA of both species (Fig.5.3). Although *Sedum* species have been reported as resistant to many pests, they have also been shown to be sensitive to aphids, mainly during flowering (Raupp et al., 1994).

The evolution of RA throughout the experiment was clearly related to soil cover and to canopy color, which depend on the growth habit and the phenology of the species. *Brachypodium phoenicoides* showed a moderate but constant RA, probably as a consequence of its slow growth habit and its ability to keep green leaves during summer, which is probably related to the summer dormancy behavior reported in some *Brachypodium* species (Holmes, 1996). However, this species showed an RA decrease at the end of the experiment as a consequence of the increase in the accumulation of senescent biomass (yellow coverage).

Crithmum maritimum, *L. virgatum* and *S. sedifforme* showed a peak of RA during the flowering season, which highlights the interest of long- and intensely flowering species in green roofs when esthetics is a key goal (Benvenuti and Bacci, 2010 ; Vestrella et al,2015). Moreover, flowering of entomophilous species, such as *C. maritimum*, *L. virgatum* and *S. sedifforme*, has also been reported to be an important trait for the improvement of biodiversity in urban areas (Clemants et al., 2006; Kadas, 2006.; Tonietto et al., 2011) because of their ability to attract insects. In addition, since entomophilous species usually produce smaller amounts of pollen, they would cause a lower incidence of allergic reactions, which is an increasing concern in plant selection for urban greening due to the increase of respiratory diseases reported in the last few decades (Fernandez-Cañero et al., 2013).

The availability of water is the most limiting factor for urban greening in semi-arid and Mediterranean-climate areas, and because of this, selecting plants that are able to perform well under water-limited conditions is key to increasing green roof implementation in these zones. The studied species showed very similar soil cover, biomass production and RA throughout the experiment regardless of water treatment, suggesting the high performance of these species under deficit-irrigation conditions, previous surveys reported similar result appain a water limited treatment to Mediterranean herbaceous species (Vestrella et al,2015). Indeed, the WL treatment delivered only 25 % of ETP, which can be considered a highly conservative irrigation schedule in semi-arid and Mediterranean-climate areas (García-Navarro et al., 2004). Several studies have reported the capacity of many *Sedum* species to survive and grow under water-limited conditions as a consequence of their fleshy leaves and CAM or CAM-facultative metabolism (Benvenuti and Bacci, 2010; Blanusa et al., 2013; Farrell et al., 2013; Monterusso

et al., 2005). *Crithmum maritimum* has also fleshy leaves, and despite its C₃ metabolism it is able to grow on rocky shores and flower in summer, the dry season, under salt and drought stress (Ben Hamed et al., 2007). Similarly, *L. virgatum* grows in rocky shores under drought and salt stress, and although it showed a slight loss of turgor during summer middays it was able to keep similar RA values under WW and WL conditions, probably due to its growth habit as a cushion plant, which would reduce its water loss (Galmés et al., 2005) and remain compact in shape (Vestrella et al., 2015).

Hot, dry summers and cool winters have been identified as major limitations to plant selection in urban greening in many Mediterranean-climate areas (Bevilacqua et al., 2015; Farrell et al., 2013; Flexas et al., 2014; Raimondo et al., 2015) since the capacity to perform well under summer drought conditions is usually linked to adaptations that limit plant growth and survival under relatively low temperatures. Moreover, a trade-off between stress resistance and growth capacity has also been suggested in plant species (Wright et al., 2004). For green roof implementation, the low capacity for winter performance of many drought-resistant species would lead to a low water-consumption capacity when water is highly available, i.e., from October to April in many Mediterranean-climate areas, thus limiting the ability of these species to address stormwater management at least in terms of runoff reduction, since runoff retention is still an accomplished benefit when comparing drought resistant vegetation with unplanted soil or conventional roof (Farrell et al., 2013).

The species assessed along two years under field conditions showed significant differences in water consumption in summer, but a different pattern was observed in winter. It is remarkable that *S. sediforme* registered the lowest WC in summer but did not show a significantly lower WC in winter 2014 compared to the species with the highest WC. In this sense, it is interesting to highlight the ability of *S. sediforme* to consume water at relatively low temperatures despite being a succulent plant. This capacity is probably due to its CAM-facultative metabolism (Butler and Orians, 2011; MacIvor et al., 2013; Schroll et al., 2011; VanWoert et al., 2005; Vestrella et al., 2015; Wolf and Lundholm, 2008), an adaptation that would confer both summer drought survival capacity and a relatively high ability to grow under Mediterranean winter conditions (Monterusso et al., 2005). By contrast, *S. pungens* showed a significantly lower WC during winter due to its C₄

metabolism, which has been linked to high water-use efficiency and salt and drought resistance in many plant species but also leads to low growth and survival capacity under moderately low temperatures (Toscano et al., 2015).

The production of biomass has opposite consequences in green roof performance and services. A high biomass production would lead to potentially higher RA, WC and carbon sequestration capacity; however, it would also require higher maintenance (i.e., mowing or pruning). Nevertheless, all the studied species can be considered to need low maintenance, since they did not show a high biomass accumulation when compared with other green roof reports (Kristin L Getter et al., 2009; Whittinghill et al., 2014). In fact, throughout the two-year experimental period, all the studied species only needed an annual pruning or mowing after flower senescence. Although *Sedum* species have been suggested to be slow-growing species (Butler and Orians, 2011; Dunnett et al., 2008; Young et al., 2014), *S. sediforme* showed the highest biomass accumulation regardless of water treatment, which is in agreement with the RA results and highlights the good performance of *S. sediforme* under Mediterranean-climate conditions with deficit irrigation. In addition to *S. sediforme*, *B. phoenicoides* also showed no significant differences in biomass accumulation at the end of the experiment between water treatments, suggesting the high capacity of this grass species to adapt to extensive green roof conditions in Mediterranean-climate areas. The RDM accounted up to 66.22 % of the TDM, which highlights the importance of considering roots in the estimation of carbon sequestration capacity. Moreover, the carbon fixed in the roots is expected to be sequestered for longer periods of time than the carbon in leaves, since leaf lifespan tends to be shorter than root lifespan, except in the fine roots, which have a rapid turnover. The results reported suggest a low capacity of carbon sequestration (between 1.6 and 0.2 kg of C m⁻² in two years), which is well below the carbon fixation capacity reported for other urban green areas (Getter et al., 2009; Whittinghill et al., 2014). In fact, the carbon sequestration capacity of extensive green roofs has been shown to be low as a consequence of austere environmental conditions that limit the growth capacity of plants, i.e., shallow and poor substrates and high sun and wind exposures (Getter et al., 2009; MacIvor and Lundholm, 2011; Wolf and Lundholm, 2008). Nevertheless, the contribution of green roofs to carbon sequestration at a

regional scale cannot be negligible, since they are usually implemented in non-green areas where there is no carbon sequestration at all.

5.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study shows that in addition to *S. sediforme*, the species that altogether performed the best, there are a number of Mediterranean species that can be considered in the implementation of extensive green roofs. Moreover, succulent CAM or CAM-facultative species have evidenced a good adaptation to extensive green roof conditions under semi-arid and Mediterranean conditions. However, this work shows that there are other plant adaptations to drought that can provide a good performance under the stressful conditions of extensive green roofs. In this sense, *B. phoenicoides* can be highlighted as a grass species with a slow growth rate and summer dormancy behavior that confer a high relative appearance over the year, keeping green leaves even under deficit irrigation and retaining a relatively high ability to consume water during the rainy season. *Limonium virgatum*, a cushion plant that can grow on rocky shores, showed a high relative appearance due to both its flowering and its compact plant shape and had a relatively high carbon sequestration capacity. In contrast, the use of C₄ species, such as *S. pungens*, in urban greening in Mediterranean climate areas may be constrained by the ability of these species to survive in winter and to regrow in early spring.

Capítulo VI

**CAPACIDAD DE REGULACIÓN
TÉRMICA DE UN SISTEMA DE
CUBIERTA AJARDINADA EN LA
REGIÓN MEDITERRÁNEA: EFECTO DE
LA VEGETACIÓN Y EL RIEGO.**

Thermal regulation capacity of a green roof system in the Mediterranean region: The effects of vegetation and irrigation level.

ABSTRACT

The increasing interest in green roof implementation and research is based on the environmental benefits of this technique. The thermal regulation capacity of a green roof system is considered a very relevant benefit due to its environmental and economic interest.

In this study, an experimental modular evaluation was performed to quantify the contribution of vegetation cover by evaluating two Mediterranean native species and the effect of irrigation water volume on the thermal capacity of a green roof system in a Mediterranean area.

A positive effect of the vegetation presence was evidenced, with important substrate temperature reductions during spring and summer. Daily heat gain and loss were reduced as a consequence of vegetation presence. *Sedum sediforme* performed as a better insulator than *Brachypodium phoenicoides* during the experimental period in spring and summer, with few differences in autumn and winter. The modules with the 25% of potential evapotranspiration applied as limited irrigation reported lower heat flux values than well irrigated module (considered as 50% of potential evapotranspiration) in all seasons. The plant response to irrigation treatment is here evaluated to explain the thermal regulation effect during the whole year. The main conclusion is that there is a positive influence of species selection and sustainable irrigation management in the thermal regulation properties of green roofs under Mediterranean conditions.

6.1. Introduction

Green roofs are considered an ancient technique (Oberndorfer et al., 2007) and are currently defined as a living system that is an extension of a roof. A green roof system typically contains a high quality water proofing membrane and root barrier, drainage system, filter fabric, a lightweight growing medium, and plants (Barrio, 1998; Tolderlund, 2010). Modern green roof systems have been receiving increasing attention because of the synergy of their multiple ecosystem benefits, and extensive green roofing technologies are considered an alternative to addressing environmental challenges, especially in urban areas. It is generally recognized that green roof implementation provides several ecological benefits, such as biodiversity improvement in urban areas (Drive and K, n.d.; Dvorak and Volder, 2010; Oberndorfer et al., 2007), runoff management (Fioretti et al., 2010), atmospheric and acoustic pollution reduction (Veisten et al., 2012; Yang et al., 2008) and thermal regulation (Akbari and Konopacki, 2005; Butler and Orians, 2011; Hien et al., 2003; Lundholm et al., 2010; MacIvor and Lundholm, 2011; Peng and Jim, 2013; Santamouris et al., 2007).

In recent decades, extensive green roofs have been considered a useful tool for sustainable development, which has largely increased the research performed on green roofs and their benefits around the world. Most of the green roof research and implementation has been developed in temperate climates without a dry season (Clark, 2008; Emilsson, 2005) and in arid and tropical climates (Hien et al., 2003; Tolderlund, 2010); less attention has been traditionally devoted to other climate areas such as the Mediterranean. However, this situation is changing, and several recent studies provide evidence of the major impact of climate on green roof performance and suggest the importance of local research (Ascione et al., 2013; Zinzi and Agnoli, 2012).

The “Mediterranean” climate is defined in the Köppen-Geiger climate classification as a hot dry-summer (Csa), and is characterized as a temperate climate (above 0 °C but below 18 °C of mean temperature) in its coolest month with hot and dry summer period with less than 30 mm of precipitation and an average temperature in the warmest month above 22 °C (Kottek et al., 2006). Therefore, in Mediterranean climate areas, the long summer dry period has been considered as a major constraint for green roof implementation as water

availability for irrigation is also a limiting factor in those areas. However, recent studies have shown sustainable green roof performance under water stress conditions in Mediterranean areas (Barrio, 1998; Fioretti et al., 2010; Santamouris et al., 2007; Theodosiou, 2003; Zinzi and Agnoli, 2012), suggesting that green roofs may benefit these areas. Nevertheless, quantitative approximations for understanding the influence of green roof components and climate over green roof efficiency and performance in Mediterranean climate areas are still needed.

Among the different benefits provided by green roofs, the thermal regulation of buildings and surroundings has been highlighted as one of the most relevant from both an economic and environmental point of view (Fernandez-Cañero et al., 2013; Li and Yeung, 2014; Raji et al., 2015; Vijayaraghavan, 2016). Several studies have demonstrated that extensive green roofs reduce temperature and incident radiation by shading the roof surface and through enhanced evaporation (Barrio, 1998; Blanusa et al., 2013; Fioretti et al., 2010; Hien et al., 2003; Raji et al., 2015). Moreover, heat flux through the building envelope has been shown to be reduced by the presence of green roofs during cold and warm seasons, which would decrease the energy demand for both cooling and heating (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2009; Lazzarin et al., 2005; Zinzi and Agnoli, 2012). However, seasonal differences in heat flux reduction have been reported, and shown to be higher in summer than in winter, partially as a consequence of different plant developments between seasons, although irrigation and climatic factors, such as precipitation patterns and extreme temperatures, also largely affect heat flux reduction (Getter et al., 2011; Lin et al., 2013; Lundholm et al., 2010; Theodosiou, 2003).

The green roof thermal insulation capacity is a consequence of the insulation ability of its components. Among those components, substrate properties and water content as well as the plant presence and traits account for most of the green roof thermal insulation. In this sense, vegetated green roofs have been shown to reduce the temperature under the roof surface and the heat flux to a larger extent than do non-vegetated (bare soil) ones (Ascione et al., 2013; Blanusa et al., 2013; Butler and Orians, 2011; Getter et al., 2011; Speak et al., 2013). Plants, through their biological functions such as photosynthesis, transpiration, respiration and evaporation, absorb a significant proportion of solar

radiation, changing the heat transfer process to the vegetated roof (Vijayaraghavan, 2016).

Similarly, the presence of vegetation has been suggested to reduce the surrounding air temperature and to increase albedo (Hien et al., 2003; Li and Yeung, 2014; Maclvor et al., 2011; Peng and Jim, 2013). Moreover, significant effects of plant selection and species interaction over temperature and heat flux have been reported (Bevilacqua et al., 2015; Maclvor et al., 2011; Maclvor and Lundholm, 2011). Plant traits such as plant height, leaf area index and plant responses to drought have been suggested to exert a great influence on the green roof thermal insulation capacity (Barrio, 1998; Farrell et al., 2013; Price et al., 2013; Raimondo et al., 2015; Speak et al., 2013; Theodosiou, 2003). Plants with a high density and height are able to provide more shading and transpiration cooling, suggesting that plant phenology, plant water consumption and its interaction are key points to understand seasonal differences in the relative contribution of each plant species to the thermal insulation capacity of the green roof (Bevilacqua et al., 2015; Coma et al., 2016). Canopy architecture and perennality have also been shown to affect green roof thermal insulation capacity (Bevilacqua et al., 2015; Blanusa et al., 2013; Lundholm et al., 2010; Theodosiou, 2003).

In addition to the vegetation, the substrate water content largely determines the green roof thermal performance, although its effects have been considered a controversial issue (Castleton et al., 2010; Farrell et al., 2013; Vestrella et al., 2015). Some authors have suggested that a higher substrate water content results in a larger thermal insulation capacity (Barrio, 1998; Blanusa et al., 2013; Kanellopoulou, 2008). However, other results showed that a low substrate water content could enhance energy savings with a lower heating demand during summer and winter (Castleton et al., 2010; Zinzi and Agnoli, 2012). These results suggest the relevance of irrigation strategies in green roofs to maximize thermal insulation benefits when water availability is limited (Li and Yeung, 2014; Maclvor et al., 2013; Raimondo et al., 2015; Van Mechelen et al., 2015).

As has been previously mentioned, green roof thermal insulation capacity has been supported by mathematical approaches and modeling. In this study, we provide experimental data through an accurate monitoring observation and field measurement on simulated green roof modules, with the aim to estimate the

green roof thermal regulation potential in Mediterranean climate areas considering four seasons via three specific objectives: i) to quantify the contribution of vegetation to the thermal regulation capacity in a green roof system; ii) to evaluate the effect of plant type and canopy architecture on thermal regulation capacity; and iii) to assess the effect of irrigation treatment on thermal regulation capacity.

6.2. Materials and methods

Green roof system modules construction

The experiment was carried out in the island of Mallorca at the experimental field of the University of the Balearic Islands (Spain, Western Mediterranean Basin, 39° 38' N, 2° 38' E, 80 m a.s.l.). The climate is typical Mediterranean, with hot and dry summers and cool, wet winters. The Palma de Mallorca mean accumulated annual rainfall is 408.5 mm, and the mean annual air temperature is 18.1 °C (Aemet, 2011). Experimental metal modules of 0.56 m² (0.75 m x 0.75 m) and 0.15 m depth were installed one meter above the soil. The modules' filling followed a commercial pattern and proceeded from the top to the bottom in the following layers: 1) 0.12 m of substrate composed by a recycled product based on specially processed clay tiles and 10.6 % organic material, with a bulk density of 1120 g/l. This substrate is considered to be suitable for extensive green roofs due to its stable structure, with multi-layer build-ups that reduce water loss. The substrate thickness is considered within the range commonly given for extensive green roof definition (Tolderlund, 2010). The substrate water content at field capacity (27.9 %) was determined by gravimetric methods (watering to saturation and allowing 12 h of drainage and 48 h of drying at 105 °C); 2) filter sheet of polypropylene (Filter system SF; ZinCo GmbH); 3) drain system of recycled polyolefin (Floral Drain FD 40-E, ZinCo GmbH) and 4) protection mat of recycled synthetic fibers (Protection mat SSM 45; ZinCo GmbH) (Fig. 6.1).

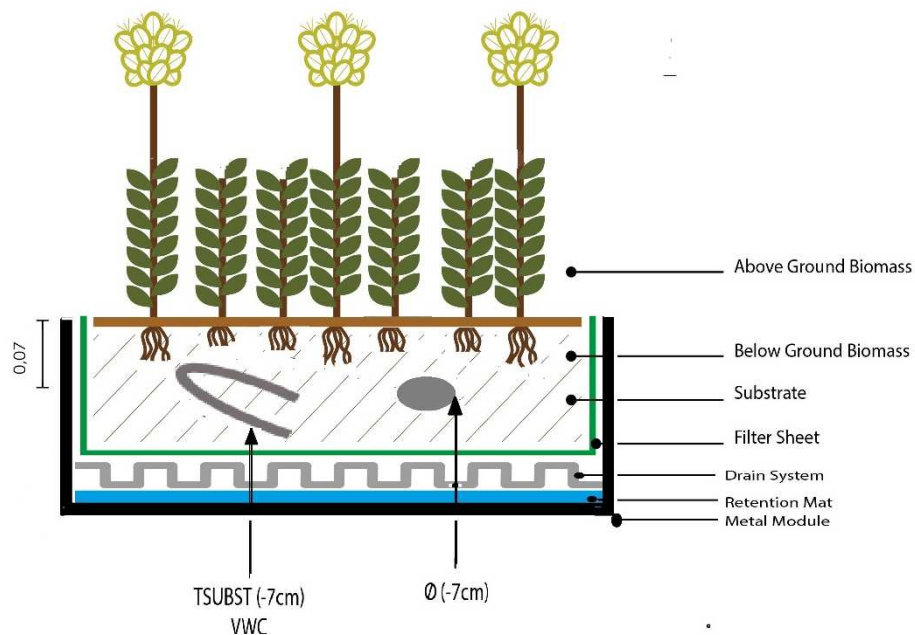


Figure 6.1. Experimental module system with green roof system components disposition and installed sensors positions.

Plant material and watering

The experiment was conducted with three different vegetation treatments: two non-vegetated modules (bare soil), two modules vegetated with *Sedum sediforme* and two modules vegetated with *Brachypodium phoenicoides*. *Sedum* species are commonly used in Mediterranean green roofs because of their low water consumption, their ability to withstand mild cold winters and hot summers due to their CAM metabolism. *Sedum sediforme* canopy architecture is characterized by fleshy leaves and inflorescence opened into various branches, yellow flowers, formed at the top of a fertile stem. *B. phoenicoides* (Poaceae) is a grass with long leaves concentrated at the base of the plant, with spikelets usually arched and rigid, usually showing a high water consumption, but it is able to keep green leaves during summer dry period with relatively low irrigation. The seeds of both species were germinated in seed benches with horticultural substrate (Prohumin Sustrato Klasmann-Deilmann, Comercial Projar S.A., Valencia, Spain) between October and November 2012 under greenhouse

conditions. Seedlings were grown until February 2013, when they were placed outdoors to facilitate plant acclimation. In mid-March, after 45 days outdoors, 9 plants of the same species were planted in each module (16 plants·m⁻²). Water treatments were imposed according to the average species coefficient (Ks), estimated to be 0.5 (Costello et al., 2000). According to this Ks, the irrigation with 50 % of ET₀ (Potential evapotranspiration) can be considered as a well-watered (WW) condition, since this irrigation provides 100 % of the estimated water requirements; and the irrigation with 25 % of ET₀ can be considered as a water-limited (WL) condition, since it provides 50 % of plant water requirements. ET₀ was calculated from data recorded by a meteorological station (Meteodata 3000, Geónica SA, Madrid, Spain) at the experimental site following the Penman-Monteith equation). Surface drip irrigation at 50 % and 25 % of potential evapotranspiration (ET₀) was applied twice a week during the calculated time according to the nominal drippers flow (2 l·h⁻¹ for each dripper) and considering the number of drippers (9 drippers for each module). Precipitation was considered for irrigation since it was included in ET₀ equation.

Environmental monitoring and data acquisition system.

To ensure plant establishment, environmental measurements (air temperature, temperature in the middle of the substrate, heat flux and soil volumetric water content) were begun one year after planting, in March 2014. Plant cover measured by a digital image analysis of vegetated modules (data not shown) ranged from 88 % to 94 % in *S. sediforme* and *B. phoenicoides* without important differences between species neither between irrigation treatments (Fig.6.2 A-B).



A

B

Figure 6.2. **A.** Experimental metal module covered with *Brachypodium phoenicoides* at the beginning of experiment (spring 2014), 88% to 94% soil cover. **B.** Experimental metal module covered with *Sedum sediforme* at the beginning of experiment (spring 2014), 90% to 94% soil cover.

The soil volumetric water content (VWC) and temperature in the middle of the substrate $T_{\text{subst}} (-7\text{cm})$ were recorded in each module at 7 cm below the substrate surface by using six Soil Water Content Reflectometer CS650. The temperature precision was ± 0.02 °C and the accuracy ± 0.5 °C for the probe buried in soil. The volumetric water content precision (repeatability of measurements) was < 0.05 % and an accuracy of ± 3 % of reading typical in mineral soils (Campbell Scientific, Inc). One sensor (Heat Flux Plate HFP01) with an accuracy (12 hour totals) of -15 % to +5 % in most common soils (Campbell Scientific, Inc) was installed at 7 cm below the substrate surface in each of the six modules to estimate soil heat flux (Fig.6.1).

These dataloggers were based on an Arduino hardware platform and programmed using C. Additional circuitry was added for signal adaptation from the sensors. One slave circuit was dedicated to each of the six modules, the slave circuits performed instrument measurements at the same time. These measurements were stored in a SD card and collected monthly. Instrument features allow measurement without performing specific calibration, considering a measurement specific range.

Postprocessing of the heat flux data showed that heat flux plate installed in the *S. sediforme* water-limited module underestimated the heat flux during night and

day. Therefore, it was decided to arrange experimental design to compare water irrigation just in *Brachypodium phoenicoides* and bare soil modules.

In order to estimate the differences between the modules related to thermal insulation, this study has considered the number of days of the measured periods (N_d) and positive and negative heat flux values (Q_t). Measurements were registered each hour (Wh/m^2) representing respectively the heat that enters and leaves the system module. It allowed estimating daily transported energy (E , Wh/m^2d) for heat gain and heat loss throughout the system using the following equation:

$$E = \frac{1}{N_d} (\int Q dt) \quad \text{Eq. (6.1)}$$

U-values (heat transfer coefficient) expressed in $W/m^2 \text{ } ^\circ C$ are commonly used for energy efficiency assessment of a system (Barrio, 1998; Clark et al., 2008; Clark, 2008). The U-value of the experimental green roof system used in this work can be roughly estimated by the ratio of the measured absolute value of instantaneous heat flux Q (W/m^2) to the absolute value of the temperature difference ($^\circ C$) between the air temperature (T_{air}) and temperature measured at 7 cm below the substrate surface $T_{subst(-7cm)}$ (Eq. (6.2) (Clark et al., 2008; Getter et al., 2011; Lundholm et al., 2010):

$$U = \frac{Q}{(T_{air} - T_{subst(-7cm)})} \quad \text{Eq. (6.2)}$$

The calculated heat transfer coefficient (U) from Eq. (2) may not be the thermal coefficient of the experimental module, since we are only considering the difference in temperature between air and 7 cm under the soil.

Statistical analysis

SPSS software version 19 (Chicago IL, USA) was used for statistical analysis. Measured parameters: substrate temperature, volume water content and heat flux, were analyzed with non-parametrical tests. To analyze the effect of vegetation presence and plant type, differences between bare soil, *B. phoenicoides* and *S. sediforme* a Kruskal- Wallis test was performed, then if the p value was lower than 0.05 (statistical significance) the analysis was completed

by using a two-tailed Mann-Whitney U test as a post hoc test to compare two species between them and each one with bare soil. To analyze differences between irrigation treatments a Mann-Whitney U test was performed.

6.3. Results

The analyzed data were collected during the following specific periods for each season: 9th to 19th April 2014 (spring), 12th to 21st July 2014 (summer), 1st to 10th November 2014 (autumn) and 11th to 21st January 2015 (winter).

The climatic conditions during the experiment were typically Mediterranean, as shown in Table 6.1. The mean highest temperature was registered during the summer analyzed period (25.1 °C), and the lowest during the winter considered period (9.5 °C); no precipitation was registered during the summer period, while during the autumn analyzed period, the total precipitation reached 55.8 mm when the most important precipitation event (53.7 mm) occurred (4th and 5th of November). The winter period recorded 24.6 mm, falling between the 19th and 21st of January.

Table 6.1. Maximum (T max, °C), Minimum (T min, °C) and Mean (T mean, °C) air temperature and precipitation (in mm) of each sampling period: Spring (9-19 April), Summer (11-21 July), Autumn (1-10 November) and Winter (11-21 January).

| | T max. | T min. | T mean | Precipitation |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------|
| Spring | 23.7 | 8.9 | 16.7 | 0.40 |
| Summer | 35.9 | 16.3 | 25.1 | 0.0 |
| Autumn | 24.0 | 8.7 | 15.6 | 55.8 |
| Winter | 18.3 | 1.0 | 9.5 | 24.6 |

Experimental site is characterized by westerly flows and sea-breeze and land breeze regimes. Westerly flows dominate in the cold part of the year, while anticyclonic conditions are very frequent between during the warm months of the year, bringing moister and cooler air, and larger wind speed (4-5 m/s at 10 m above the surface) (Cuxart,2007). Nocturnal wind blows having wind speeds around 1-2 m/s, with an approximate height of 80 m above the ground that enhances wind shear and turbulent mixing (Cuxart,2004).

Vegetation presence and roof planted type effect

The temperature measured at 7 cm below the substrate surface $T_{\text{subst}} (-7\text{cm})$ followed a diurnal pattern, increasing from mid-morning to midday, from 11 h to 15 h depending on the season (Fig. 6.3A-D). The thermal oscillation registered at 7 cm below substrate was lower in vegetated than in bare soil modules and larger during the analyzed days of July suggesting a tendency to be larger in summer than in any other season. Within the vegetated modules, the thermal oscillation was lower in the *S. sedifforme* module than in the *B. phoenicoides* module in all seasons. In this sense, the lowest mean values of the maximum temperatures were registered in the *S. sedifforme* module and were 3 °C and 8 °C lower than in the *B. phoenicoides* module in the spring and summer analyzed periods, respectively. During autumn and winter periods, the means of the minimum $T_{\text{subst}} (-7\text{cm})$ were higher in vegetated modules than in the non-vegetated one (approximately 2 °C) but did not have important differences between species (Table 2 - Fig. 6.3A-D).

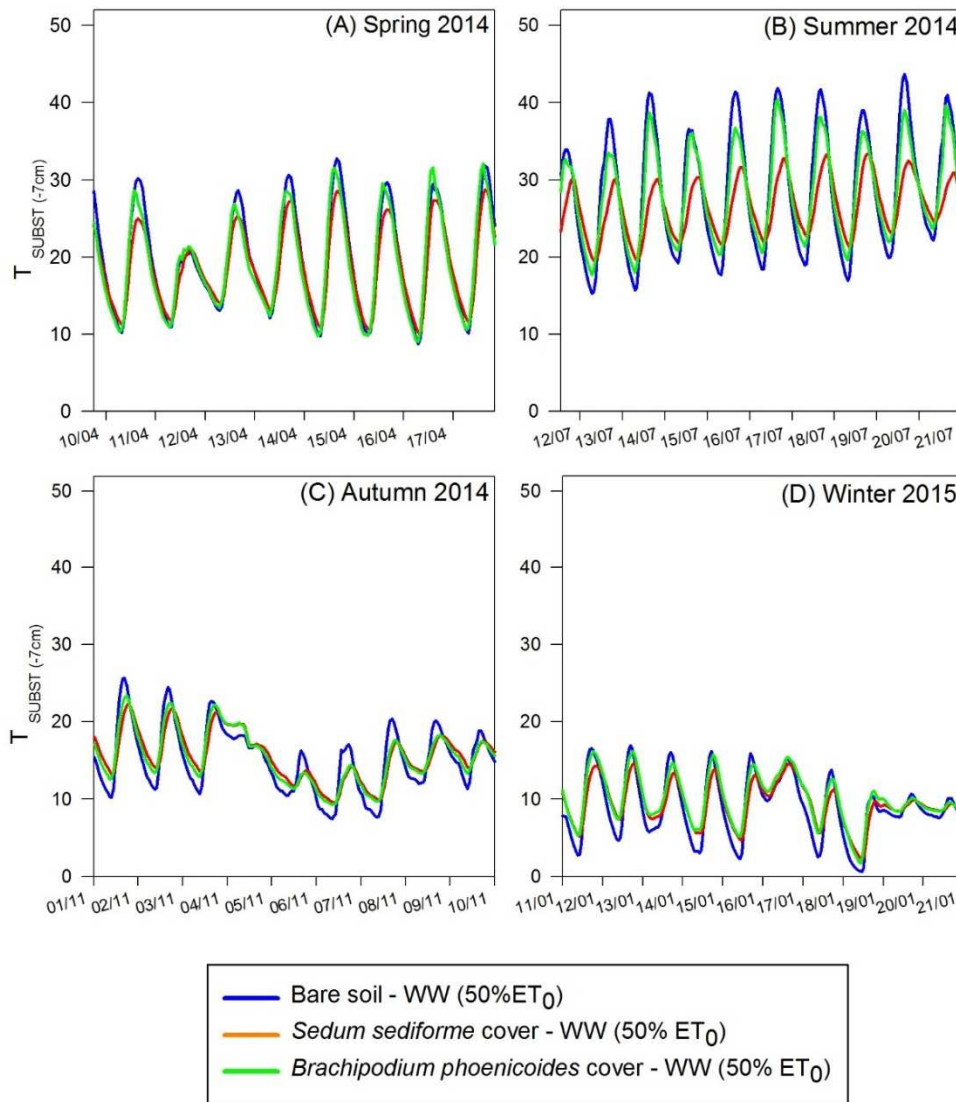


Figure 6.3. Temperature at 7 cm below the surface $T_{subst(-7cm)}$ of well-watered (WW) bare soil, *S. Sediforme* and *B. phoenicoides* modules. Measurements were taken every hour during 10 days of each season: (A) Spring (9-19 April), (B) Summer (11-21 July), (C) Autumn (1-10 November) and (D) Winter (11-21 January).

$T_{subst(-7cm)}$ reductions were calculated as the mean of the differences between the temperature values registered in well-watered (WW) bare soil modules and each plant type of vegetated treatments (*S. sediforme* (WW) and *B. phoenicoides* (WW)), of vegetated modules. Values registered in bare soil modules were considered as references in each case. These reductions during the spring and summer periods as a consequence of the vegetation presence varied from 0.38 to 2.13 °C. Those differences were higher when the bare soil module was compared to *S. sediforme* in all seasons except in winter, when the *B.*

phoenicoides module registered a $T_{\text{subst}} (-7\text{cm})$ significant difference of $1.02\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ with bare soil module (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2. Substrate temperature measured at 7 cm below substrate $T_{subst (-7cm)}$. Means of daily maximum value (Max) and daily minimum value (Min) \pm SE of sampling period days. Mean of $T_{subst (-7cm)}$ values for each sampling period \pm SE of horary data for each sampling period: Spring (9-19 April), Summer (11-21 July), Autumn (1-10 November) and Winter (11-21 January). Negative reductions are understood as an increment of $T_{subst (-7cm)}$. Lowercase letters denote significant differences between estimated values of (WW) Bare soil, *B. phoenicoides* and *S. Sediforme*. (*) denotes significant difference between *B. phoenicoides* and *S. sediforme* reductions.

| | Bare soil | | | <i>B. phoenicoides</i> cover | | | Reduction (°C) | <i>S. Sediforme</i> cover | | | Reduction (°C) |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Max. \pm SE | Min. \pm SE | Mean \pm SE | Max. \pm SE | Min. \pm SE | Mean \pm SE | | Max. \pm SE | Min. \pm SE | Mean \pm SE | |
| Spring | | | | | | | | | | | |
| $T_{subst (-7cm)}$ | 29.41 \pm 1.15 | 13.47 \pm 2.48 | 19.85 \pm 0.49a | 28.48 \pm 1.12 | 11.16 \pm 0.51 | 19.24 \pm 0.46a | 0.60 \pm 0.11 | 26.04 \pm 0.79 | 11.55 \pm 0.54 | 18.89 \pm 0.38a | 0.95 \pm 0.13 |
| Summer | | | | | | | | | | | |
| $T_{subst (-7cm)}$ | 39.52 \pm 0.9 | 18.73 \pm 0.7 | 28.69 \pm 0.49a | 36.87 \pm 0.77 | 20.79 \pm 0.61 | 28.31 \pm 0.37a | 0.38 \pm 0.14 | 31.44 \pm 0.39 | 21.89 \pm 0.45 | 26.56 \pm 0.23b | 2.13 \pm 0.35(*) |
| Autumn | | | | | | | | | | | |
| $T_{subst (-7cm)}$ | 20.16 \pm 1.02 | 10.61 \pm 0.59 | 15.08 \pm 0.26a | 18.57 \pm 1.06 | 12.3 \pm 0.53 | 15.41 \pm 0.21a | -0.32 \pm 0.10 | 18.34 \pm 0.92 | 12.82 \pm 0.58 | 15.55 \pm 0.2a | -0.46 \pm 0.14 |
| Winter | | | | | | | | | | | |
| $T_{subst (-7cm)}$ | 13.86 \pm 0.88 | 4.71 \pm 0.82 | 8.82 \pm 0.24a | 13.31 \pm 0.88 | 6.71 \pm 0.71 | 9.84 \pm 0.19b | -1.02 \pm 0.08 | 12.16 \pm 0.71 | 6.6 \pm 0.67 | 9.3 \pm 0.17c | -0.48 \pm 0.11(*) |

Volumetric soil water content (% VWC) values registered during considered periods are lower than expected values and an increment of values after irrigation was not detected as desired, obtained data of this parameter should be analyzed and interpreted with caution since used sensor consider a volumetric water content measurement range between 5% to 50%, which means that lower values would not be incorrect but are less precise. Volumetric water content values varied among seasons considered periods and modules (Fig. 6.4, Table 6.3). The precipitation events registered in autumn (November 4th and 5th) and in winter (January 18th to 21st) noticeably affected the VWC in all treatments and partially explain the observed differences among seasons. Within each season, the differences among the modules did not follow a clear pattern. Reductions were calculated as the mean of obtained differences between Bare soil-WW horary values and each plant treatment (*S. sediforme*-WW and *B. phoenicoides*-WW) of vegetated modules. Values registered in bare soil modules were considered as references in each case. During spring and autumn, the VWC% did not present significative differences among modules. In contrast, during summer and winter periods, the VWC was significantly higher in the *S. sediforme* module than in *B. phoenicoides* module (8.2 % summer and 11.72% winter) (Table 6.3).

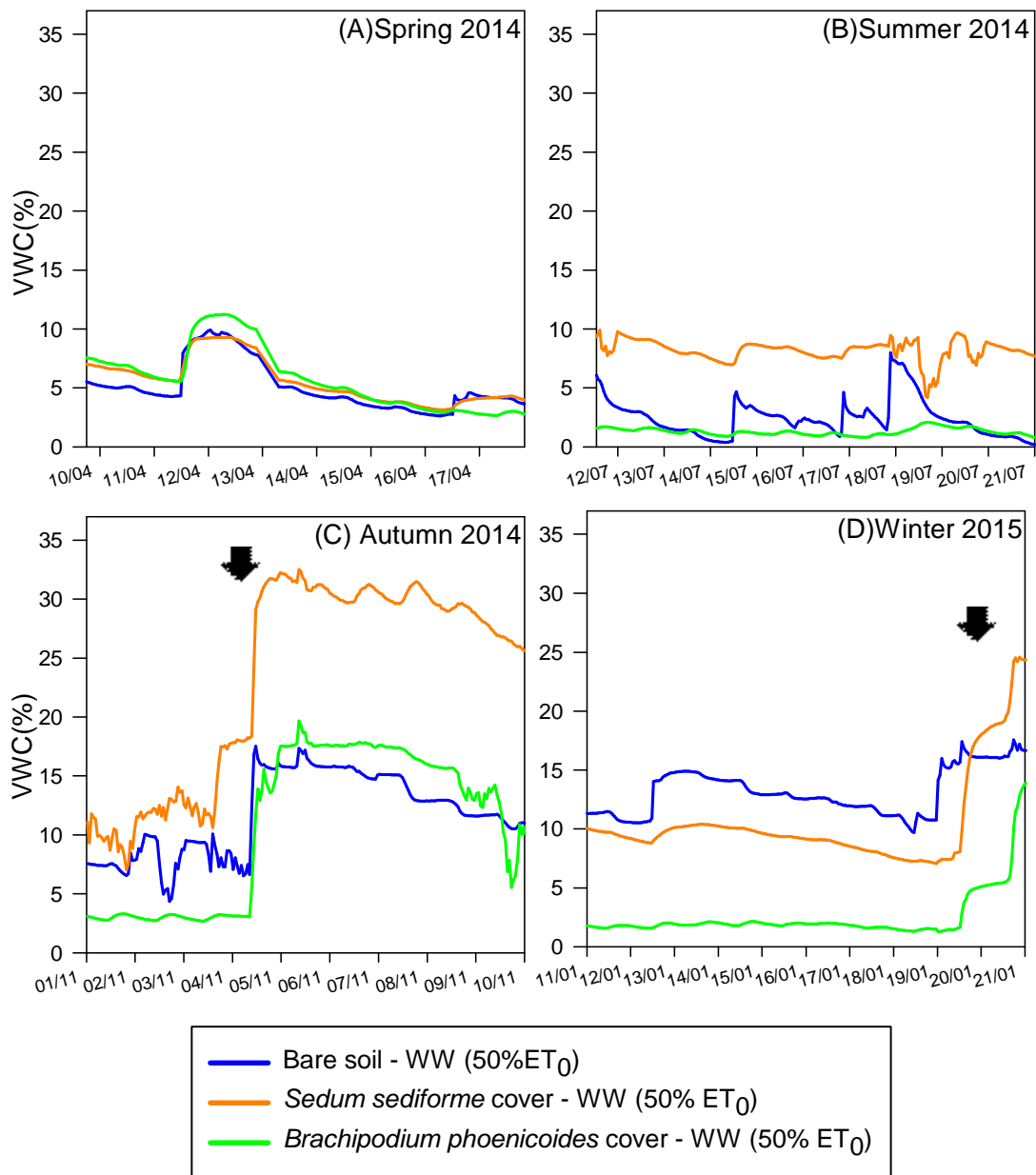


Figure 6.4. Volumetric substrate water content (VWC, %) of well-watered (WW) bare soil, *S. Sediforme* and *B. phoenicoides* modules. Measurements were taken every hour during 10 days of each season: (A) Spring (9-19 April), (B) Summer (11-21 July), (C) Autumn (1-10 November) and (D) Winter (11-21 January). Precipitation events are noted with arrows.

Table 6.3. Substrate volumetric water content (VWC %). Means of daily maximum value (Max) and daily minimum value (Min) \pm SE of sampling period days. Mean of VWC % values for each sampling period \pm SE of horary data for each sampling period: Spring (9-19 April), Summer (11-21 July), Autumn (1-10 November) and Winter (11-21 January). Negative reductions are understood as an increment of %VWC. Lowercase letters denote significant differences between estimated values of (WW) Bare soil, *B. phoenicoides* and *S. Sediforme*. (*) denotes significant difference between *B. phoenicoides* and *S. sediforme* reductions.

| | Bare soil | | | <i>B. phoenicoides</i> cover | | | Reduction (%VWC) | <i>S. Sediforme</i> cover | | | Reduction (%VWC) |
|---------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | Max \pm SE | Min \pm SE | Mean \pm SE | Max \pm SE | Min \pm SE | Mean \pm SE | | Max \pm SE | Min \pm SE | Mean \pm SE | |
| Spring | | | | | | | | | | | |
| VWC | 5.85 \pm 0.79 | 4.14 \pm 0.56 | 5.01 \pm 0.15a | 7.83 \pm 1.43 | 5.39 \pm 0.75 | 5.78 \pm 0.19b | -0.77\pm0.10 | 6.18 \pm 1.43 | 5.11 \pm 0.58 | 5.54 \pm 0.14b | -0.53\pm0.05 |
| Summer | | | | | | | | | | | |
| VWC | 4.23 \pm 0.67 | 1.24 \pm 0.3 | 2.44 \pm 0.1a | 1.46 \pm 0.09 | 1.05 \pm 0.08 | 1.27 \pm 0.02b | 1.18\pm0.10 | 9.11 \pm 0.16 | 7.32 \pm 0.35 | 8.21 \pm 0.06c | -5.76\pm0.10(*) |
| Autumn | | | | | | | | | | | |
| VWC | 13.14 \pm 1.01 | 10.07 \pm 1.21 | 11.76 \pm 0.21a | 12.65 \pm 2.12 | 8.98 \pm 2.04 | 10.92 \pm 0.4a | 0.84\pm0.22 | 25.65 \pm 2.53 | 21.64 \pm 2.88 | 23.55 \pm 0.54ab | -11.79\pm0.32 |
| Winter | | | | | | | | | | | |
| VWC | 14.24 \pm 0.68 | 12.76 \pm 0.67 | 13.47 \pm 0.13a | 4.55 \pm 1.56 | 3.07 \pm 1.15 | 3.57 \pm 0.25b | 9.89\pm0.19 | 13.01 \pm 1.9 | 10.91 \pm 1.62 | 11.72 \pm 0.34c | 1.75\pm0.25(*) |

As has been previously mentioned, positive and negative heat flux values are understood as heat gains and heat losses, respectively. The heat flux integrated overtime was used to calculate the daily transported energy (E) for heat gain and heat loss through the system. In this sense, the transported energy for heat gain was always larger than for heat loss. Within each period, diurnal patterns were consistent through the studied period except after significant precipitation events in autumn and winter, when the heat flux decreased in all tested modules; it is remarkable that after those events, the heat flux tended to recover faster in the bare soil module than in vegetated ones, evaporation is faster in bare soil, therefore heat flux increases faster too (Fig. 5C and 5D).

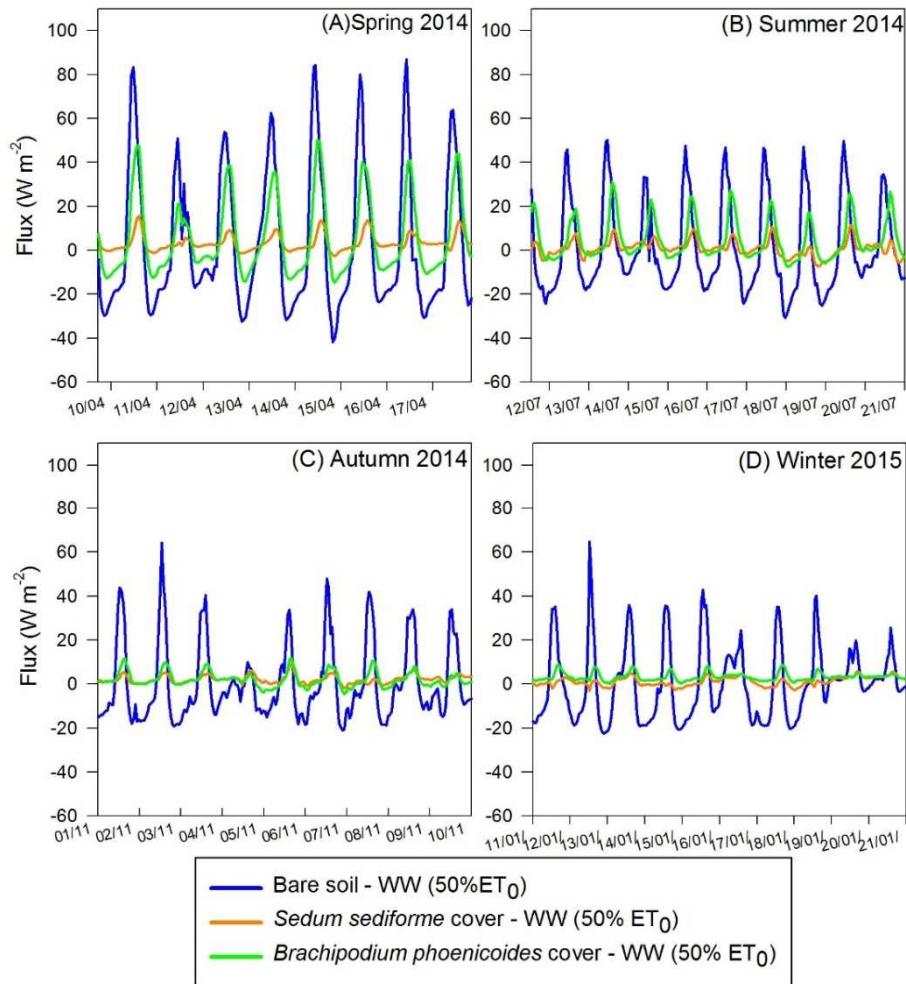


Figure 6.5. Heat flux (Wm^{-2}) of well-watered (WW) bare soil, *S. sediforme* and *B. phoenicoides* modules. Measurements were taken every hour during 10 days of each season: (A) Spring (9-19 April), (B) Summer (11-21 July), (C) Autumn (1-10 November) and (D) Winter (11-21 January).

The total heat flux was higher in the bare soil module than in vegetated ones in all seasons even though a higher oscillation was observed during the spring and summer periods (Fig. 5). The reduction percentages of the total daily transported energy (E) for heat gain and heat loss were calculated with the obtained difference between values of well-watered (WW) bare soil modules and values of each plant type treatment (*S. sediforme* WW and *B. phoenicoides* WW) of vegetated modules. Values registered in bare soil modules were considered as references in each case. The annual highest reduction was registered in *S. sediforme*, with values between 86 % in spring and 82 % in autumn. *B. phoenicoides* showed an (E) reduction between 79 % in autumn

period and 48 % in spring period (Table 6.4). Estimated daily transported energy for heat gain, heat loss and total heat flux were significant lower in vegetated modules than in bare soil and in *S. sediforme* and *B. phoenicoides* experimental modules. Estimated reduction was significant higher with *S. sediforme* coverage than with *B. phoenicoides* coverage in spring, summer and winter periods, exceptionally winter daily energy dissipation for heat loss in *B. phoenicoides* module was close to 0.0 Wh/m² day, even though it was not significant lower than *S. sediforme* reduction. In all cases, the daily dissipated energy reduction in heat loss was higher than in heat gain (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4. Daily energy dissipation for heat gain, heat loss and total flux (Wh /m²day⁻¹) ± SE of each day value within each season period: Spring (9-19 April), Summer (11-21 July), Autumn (1-10 November) and Winter (11-21 January). Lowercase letters denote significant differences between estimated values of (WW) Bare soil, *B. phoenicoides* and *S. Sediforme*. (*) denotes significant difference between *B. phoenicoides* and *S. sediforme* reductions.

| | Bare soil | <i>B. phoenicoides</i> | | <i>S. Sediforme</i> | |
|---------------|-----------|------------------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------|
| | | | Reduction (%) | | Reduction (%) |
| Spring | | | | | |
| Heat gain | 368 ± 42 | 242 ± 25 | 34 | 87±9 | 76 |
| Heat loss | 277 ± 19 | 92 ± 7 | 67 | 2±1 | 99 |
| Total flux | 645 ± 56a | 335 ± 30b | 48 | 89±9c | 86(*) |
| Summer | | | | | |
| Heat gain | 209 ± 22 | 161 ± 9 | 23 | 44±6 | 79 |
| Heat loss | 190 ± 17 | 24 ± 5 | 87 | 22±7 | 88 |
| Total flux | 399 ±52a | 185 ± 20b | 53 | 66±8c | 83(*) |
| Autumn | | | | | |
| Heat gain | 177 ± 18 | 61 ± 4 | 66 | 58±6 | 67 |
| Heat loss | 160 ± 17 | 8 ± 3 | 95 | 1±0 | 99 |
| Total flux | 337 ± 25a | 69 ± 5b | 79 | 59±7b | 82 |
| Winter | | | | | |
| Heat gain | 163 ± 9 | 77 ± 4 | 53 | 38±9 | 77 |
| Heat loss | 149 ± 28 | 0 ± 0 | 100 | 7±2 | 95 |
| Total flux | 311 ± 35a | 77 ± 4b | 75 | 45±7c | 85(*) |

Irrigation treatment effect.

The effects of limited irrigation treatment were studied in bare soil and in *B. phoenicoides* modules by applying two different treatments: well watered (WW) and water limited (WL) with 50 % and 25 % of ET₀. In all seasons and in both *B. phoenicoides* and bare soil, the T_{subst} (-7cm) showed small and not significant differences between WW and WL modules (Table 6.5 and Fig. 6.6). Similarly, the maximum and minimum VWC also showed slight differences between irrigation treatments in all seasons. Despite the highest mean VWC usually being registered during the cold season (autumn and winter), and the lowest in the summer, the variations of the VWC throughout the year did not show a clear pattern, and precipitation affected VWC evolution during the studied periods (Fig. 6.7 and Table 6.6).

Table 6.5. Substrate temperature measured at 7 cm below substrate $T_{\text{subst} (-7\text{cm})}$. Means of daily maximum value (Max) and daily minimum value (Min) \pm SE of sampling period days. Mean of $T_{\text{subst} (-7\text{cm})}$ values for each sampling period \pm SE of horary data for each sampling period: Spring (9-19 April), Summer (11-21 July), Autumn (1-10 November) and Winter (11-21 January). Negative reductions are understood as an increment of temperature values. Lowercase letters denote significant differences between $T_{\text{subst} (-7\text{cm})}$ registered in *WW* and *WL* (significant reduction). (*) denotes significant difference between Bare soil and *B. phoenicoides* reductions.

| | Bare soil | | | | | | B. phoenicoides(B.ph) | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| | WW(50%ET0) | | | WL(25%ET0) | | | WW(50%ET0) | | | WL(25%ET0) | | | | |
| | Max. \pm SE | Min. \pm SE | Mean \pm SE | Max. \pm SE | Min. \pm SE | Mean \pm SE | Reduction (°C) | Max. \pm SE | Min. \pm SE | Mean \pm SE | Max. \pm SE | Min. \pm SE | Mean \pm SE | Reduction (°C) |
| Spring | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| $T_{\text{subst} (-7\text{cm})}$ | 29.4 \pm 1.1 | 13.5 \pm 2.5 | 19.9 \pm 0.5a | 28.2 \pm 0.8 | 10.8 \pm 0.6 | 19.2 \pm 0.4a | 0.6\pm0.1 | 28.5 \pm 1.1 | 11.2 \pm 0.5 | 19.2 \pm 0.5a | 30.4 \pm 1.2 | 11.4 \pm 0.5 | 20.1 \pm 0.5a | -0.8\pm0.1 |
| Summer | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| $T_{\text{subst} (-7\text{cm})}$ | 39.5 \pm 0.9 | 18.7 \pm 0.7 | 28.7 \pm 0.5a | 36.7 \pm 0.6 | 19.9 \pm 0.7 | 28.4 \pm 0.4a | 0.3\pm0.1 | 36.9 \pm 0.7 | 20.8 \pm 0.6 | 28.3 \pm 0.4a | 37.6 \pm 0.6 | 21.5 \pm 0.6 | 28.7 \pm 0.4a | -0.3\pm0.1 |
| Autumn | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| $T_{\text{subst} (-7\text{cm})}$ | 20.2 \pm 1.0 | 10.6 \pm 0.6 | 15.0 \pm 0.3a | 19.7 \pm 0.9 | 10.9 \pm 0.6 | 14.9 \pm 0.2a | 0.1\pm0.1 | 18.6 \pm 1.1 | 12.3 \pm 0.5 | 15.4 \pm 0.2a | 18.9 \pm 1.0 | 12.0 \pm 0.6 | 15.4 \pm 0.2a | 0.0\pm0.0 |
| Winter | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| $T_{\text{subst} (-7\text{cm})}$ | 13.9 \pm 0.9 | 4.7 \pm 0.8 | 8.8 \pm 0.3a | 13.3 \pm 0.8 | 4.7 \pm 0.8 | 8.7 \pm 0.2a | 0.1\pm0.1 | 13.3 \pm 0.9 | 6.7 \pm 0.8 | 9.9 \pm 0.2a | 13.5 \pm 0.9 | 6.3 \pm 0.7 | 9.6 \pm 0.2a | 0.3\pm0.0(*) |

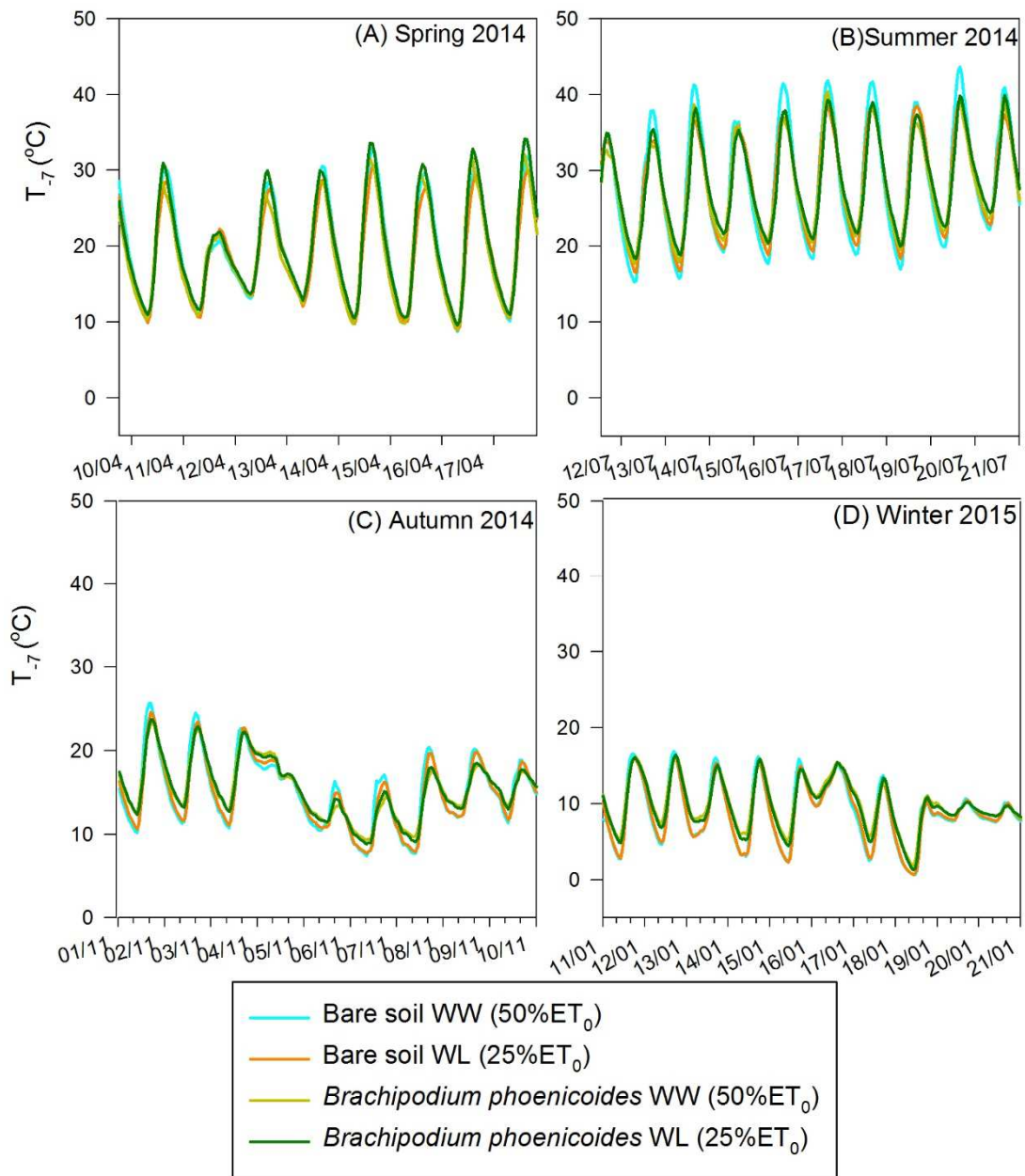


Figure 6.6 Temperature at 7 cm below the surface $T_{\text{subst} (-7\text{cm})}$ of well-watered (WW) and water-limited (WL) bare soil and *B. phoenicoides* modules. Measurements were taken every hour during 10 days of each season: (A) Spring (9-19 April), (B) Summer (11-21 July), (C) Autumn (1-10 November) and (D) Winter (11-21 January).

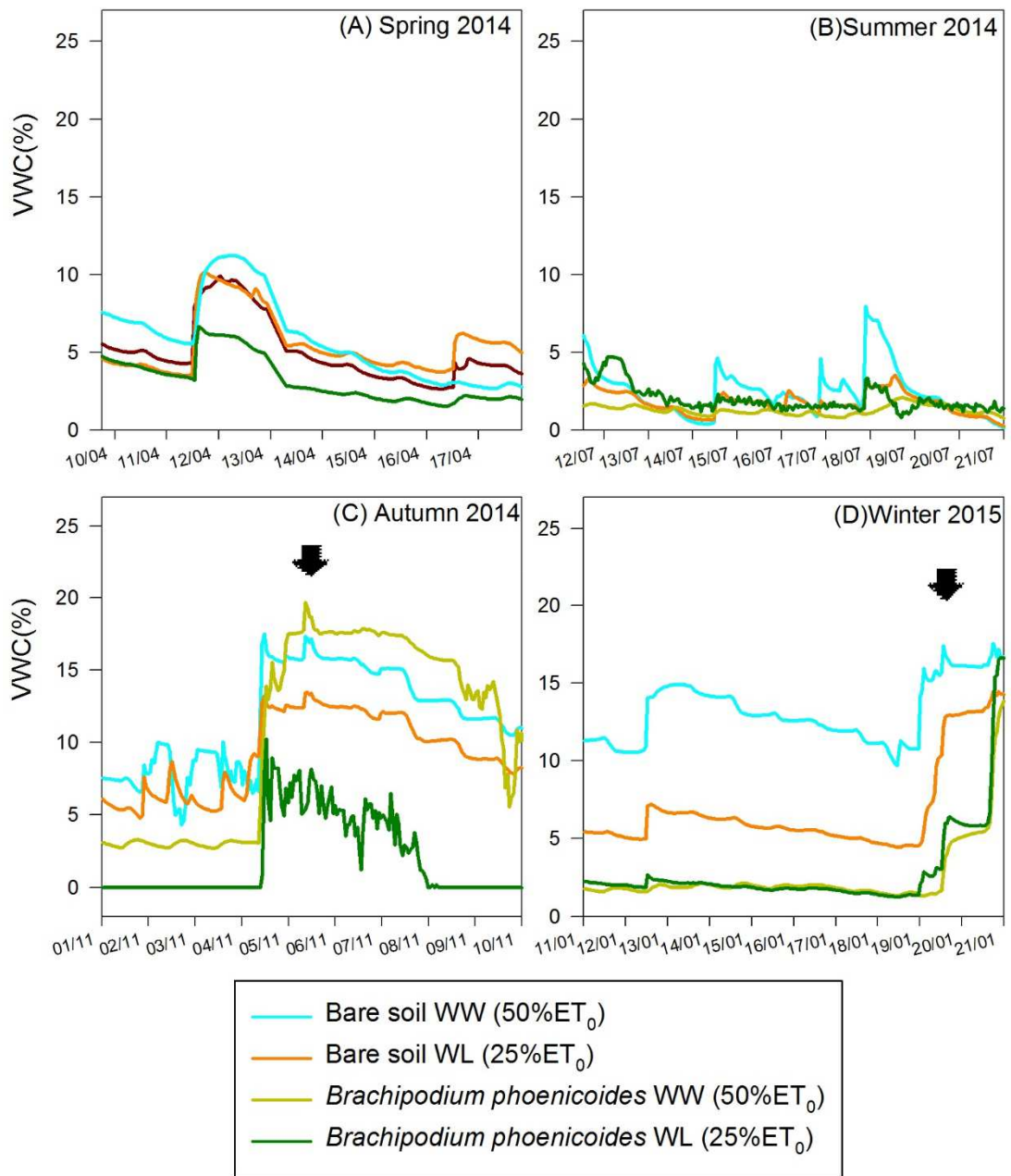


Figure 6.7. Volumetric substrate water content (VWC, %) of well-watered (WW) and water-limited (WL) bare soil and *B. phoenicoides* modules. Measurements were taken every hour during 10 days of each season: (A) Spring (9-19 April), (B) Summer (11-21 July), (C) Autumn (1-10 November) and (D) Winter (11-21 January). Precipitation events are noted with arrows.

Table 6.6. Substrate volumetric water content (VWC %). Means of daily maximum value (Max) and daily minimum value (Min) \pm SE of sampling period days. Mean of VWC % values for each sampling period \pm SE of horary data for each sampling period: Spring (9-19 April), Summer (11-21 July), Autumn (1-10 November) and Winter (11-21 January). Negative reductions are understood as an increment of %VWC. Lowercase letters denote significant differences between %VWC registered in *WW* and *WL* (significant reduction). (*) denotes significant difference between Bare soil and *B. phoenicoides* reductions.

| | Bare soil | | | | | | <i>Brachipodium phoenicoides</i> | | | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|
| | WW(50%ET0) | | | WL(25%ET0) | | | Reduction (%VWC) | WW(50%ET0) | | | WL(25%ET0) | | | Reduction (%VWC) |
| | Max. \pm SE | Min. \pm SE | Mean \pm SE | Max. \pm SE | Min. \pm SE | Mean \pm SE | | Max. \pm SE | Min. \pm SE | Mean \pm SE | Max. \pm SE | Min. \pm SE | Mean \pm SE | |
| Spring | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| VWC% | 5.8 \pm 0.8 | 4.1 \pm 0.6 | 5.0 \pm 0.1a | 6.2 \pm 0.7 | 4.4 \pm 0.5 | 5.4 \pm 0.1b | -0.5 \pm 0.1 | 7.8 \pm 1.4 | 5.4 \pm 0.7 | 5.7 \pm 0.2a | 4.1 \pm 0.6 | 3.0 \pm 0.4 | 3.2 \pm 0.1b | 2.6 \pm 0.1(*) |
| Summer | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| VWC% | 4.2 \pm 0.7 | 1.2 \pm 0.3 | 2.4 \pm 0.1a | 2.3 \pm 0.2 | 1.1 \pm 0.2 | 1.7 \pm 0.0b | 0.7 \pm 0.0 | 1.5 \pm 0.1 | 1.0 \pm 0.1 | 1.3 \pm 0.0a | 2.9 \pm 0.3 | 1.5 \pm 0.2 | 2.1 \pm 0.1b | -0.9 \pm 0.1(*) |
| Autumn | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| VWC% | 13.1 \pm 1.0 | 10.1 \pm 1.2 | 11.7 \pm 0.2a | 10.5 \pm 0.7 | 8.1 \pm 0.8 | 9.3 \pm 0.2b | 2.5 \pm 0.1 | 12.7 \pm 2.1 | 8.9 \pm 2.0 | 10.9 \pm 0.4a | 3.1 \pm 1.3 | 0.6 \pm 0.5 | 1.8 \pm 0.9b | 9.1 \pm 0.3 |
| Winter | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| VWC% | 14.2 \pm 0.7 | 12.7 \pm 0.7 | 13.5 \pm 0.1a | 8.1 \pm 1.1 | 6.7 \pm 1.0 | 7.5 \pm 0.2b | 5.9 \pm 0.1 | 4.6 \pm 1.5 | 3.1 \pm 1.1 | 3.6 \pm 0.2a | 5.2 \pm 1.9 | 3.5 \pm 1.4 | 4.0 \pm 0.3b | -0.5 \pm 0.1(*) |

Heat flux was clearly affected by limited irrigation treatment in both bare soil and *B. phoenicoides* modules, with those modules irrigated at 25 % ET₀ (water limited treatment) showing significantly lower heat flux than those well irrigated (Fig. 8) in all seasons. The bare soil module irrigated at 50 % ET₀ (well-watered treatment) showed the highest heat flux in all seasons, although the differences among this module and the others were higher in autumn and winter than in spring and summer (Fig.6.8.and Table 6.7). Reduction percentage of the total daily transported energy (E) for heat gain and heat loss were calculated with the obtained difference between values registered in well watered (WW) treatment and water limited (WL) treatment for both: bare soil modules and *B. phoenicoides* modules. Values registered in well-watered (WW) modules were the references for each case.

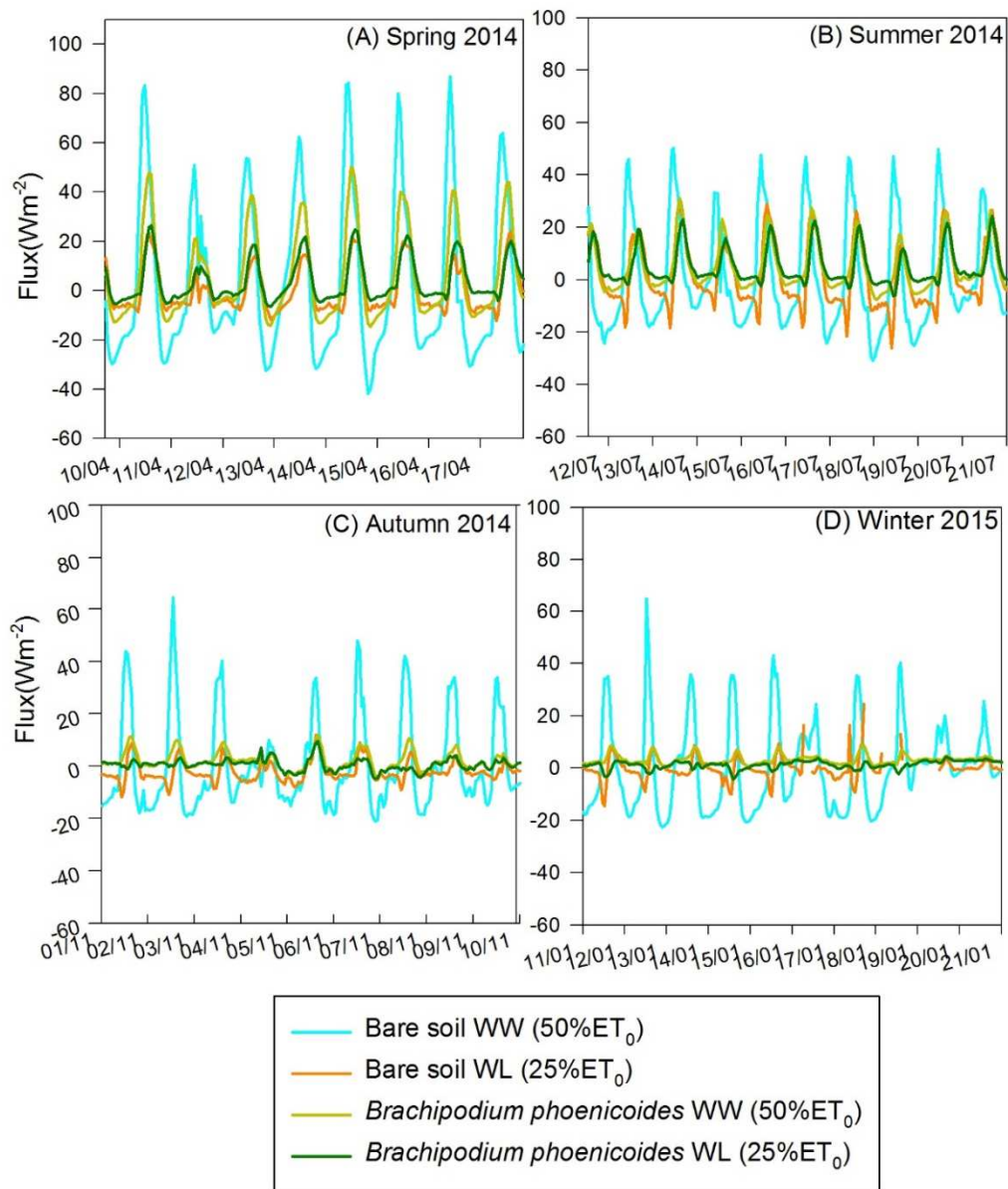


Figure 6.8. Heat flux (Wm⁻²) of well-watered (WW) and water-limited (WL) bare soil and *B. phoenicoides* modules. Measurements were taken every hour during 10 days of each season: (A) Spring (9-19 April), (B) Summer (11-21 July), (C) Autumn (1-10 November) and (D) Winter (11-21 January)

The reduction of the estimated total daily dissipated energy as a consequence of lower irrigation was significantly higher in the bare soil module than in the module covered with *B. phoenicoides*, in all analyzed periods varying from 38 % in summer to 81 % in winter analyzed periods. In the *B. phoenicoides* module, the reduction varied from 25 % in summer to 52 % in spring periods (Table 6.7). In

this sense, differences in heat flux as a consequence of irrigation effect were more evident than differences in temperature

Table 6.7. Daily energy dissipation for heat gain, heat loss and total flux (Wh /m²day⁻¹) ± SE of each day value within each season period: Spring (9-19 April), Summer (11-21 July), Autumn (1-10 November) and Winter (11-21 January). Lowercase letters denote significant differences between values estimated in *WW* and *WL* (significant reduction). (*) denotes significant difference between Bare soil and *B. phoenicoides* reductions.

| | Bare soil | | | <i>B. phoenicoides</i> | | |
|---------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| | WW (50 % ET ₀) | WL (25 % ET ₀) | Reduction % | WW (50 % ET ₀) | WL (25 % ET ₀) | Reduction % |
| Spring | | | | | | |
| Heat gain | 368 ± 42 | 101 ± 14 | 72 | 242 ± 25 | 133 ± 11 | 45 |
| Heat loss | 277 ± 19 | 85 ± 7 | 69 | 93 ± 7 | 28 ± 3 | 69 |
| Total flux | 645 ± 56a | 186 ± 18b | 71 | 335 ± 30a | 161 ± 12b | 52(*) |
| Summer | | | | | | |
| Heat gain | 209 ± 22 | 148 ± 11 | 29 | 161 ± 9 | 133 ± 9 | 18 |
| Heat loss | 190 ± 17 | 100 ± 13 | 48 | 24 ± 5 | 6 ± 2 | 77 |
| Total flux | 399 ± 52a | 247 ± 31b | 38 | 185 ± 20a | 138 ± 16b | 25(*) |
| Autumn | | | | | | |
| Heat gain | 177 ± 18 | 22 ± 5 | 88 | 61 ± 4 | 30 ± 5 | 51 |
| Heat loss | 160 ± 17 | 69 ± 6 | 57 | 8 ± 3 | 13 ± 5 | 61 |
| Total flux | 337 ± 25a | 91 ± 9b | 73 | 69 ± 5a | 43 ± 6b | 37(*) |
| Winter | | | | | | |
| Heat gain | 163 ± 9 | 29 ± 3 | 82 | 77 ± 4 | 35 ± 7 | 54 |
| Heat loss | 149 ± 28 | 30 ± 6 | 80 | 0 ± 0 | 5 ± 2 | >100 |
| Total flux | 311 ± 35a | 60 ± 9b | 81 | 77 ± 4a | 40 ± 5b | 47(*) |

6.4. Discussion

Thermal regulation has been suggested to be a green roof benefit in different climates by either field experiments or model simulations. Those studies have mostly been carried out in temperate and tropical regions, with lower attention to Mediterranean and semi-arid environments. In this work, we show that the capacity of a green roof to reduce heat flux in a Mediterranean environment varies throughout the four analyzed periods considered for each season and depends on the irrigation regime and on the vegetation presence and type. The management implications of the results are discussed in terms of plant selection and water consumption in drought-prone areas where water is the most limiting factor for green roof implementation.

The temperature at 7 cm below the substrate surface $T_{\text{subst}} (-7\text{cm})$ and heat flux data suggest that the thermal regulation capacity is higher in vegetated than in bare soil modules. In fact, oscillations of the $T_{\text{subst}} (-7\text{cm})$ and total heat flux were lower in both *S. sediforme* and *B. phoenicoides* than in the bare soil module, which is in accordance with previous studies (Oberndorfer, J.S. MacIvor, J. Lundholm, Fioretti, Hien, Kadas). In good agreement with other authors (Oberndorfer, Kadas, Veisten,, Santamouris, Eksi), the reduction of the daily maximum and mean $T_{\text{subst}} (-7\text{cm})$ was higher in *S. sediforme* than in the other modules during the analyzed periods of summer and spring, while during the ten analyzed winter's days, when higher inside temperatures are desirable, the $T_{\text{subst}} (-7\text{cm})$ was slightly higher in *B. phoenicoides* than in the other modules. The higher thermal regulation capacity of vegetated than non-vegetated green roofs has been mostly attributed to either the direct shadow effect generated by plants or the higher evapotranspiration (Ascione et al., 2013; Blanusa et al., 2013; Theodosiou, 2003). As these two factors are not always directly related, the selection of plant species and the generation of models to make such a selection easier appear to be difficult. Our results show that *S. sediforme*, a low water consumer species that forms dense and multilayer canopies with fleshy leaves, has a higher thermal regulation capacity than does *B. phoenicoides*, a grass species that usually presents higher transpiration rates than *Sedum sp.* This would suggest that the plant canopy architecture, leaf anatomy and leaf disposition in

layers would have a higher effect on thermal regulation than plant transpiration capacity.

However, several authors have suggested an interaction between the effect of plants and the season of the year in terms of the thermal regulation capacity. In this sense, both *S. sedifforme* and *B. phoenicoides* showed a thermal regulation capacity, but a higher reduction was reached with *S. sedifforme* in the spring and summer analyzed periods. Despite both species showing a similar surface cover, *B. phoenicoides* is an erectophyll species that would allow a higher incident radiation than *S. sedifforme*, a species that usually presents a creeping behavior and its maximum development and flowering during the warm season. In fact, shading has been suggested to have positive effects in summer thermal regulation but negative effects, i.e., lower temperature, in winter (British Columbia Institute of Technology, 2009; Coma et al., 2016; Getter et al., 2011; Zinzi and Agnoli, 2012). Moreover, *B. phoenicoides* presents its optimum growth period from October to April, and some *Brachypodium* species have been shown to present summer dormancy in Mediterranean areas as an adaptation to overcome the dry season. All those traits of *B. phoenicoides* suggest a potential higher thermal regulation capacity of this species during cold seasons than in summer; as it was observed in other experimental surveys with herbaceous and grasses (Holmes, 1996).

Also, some models have suggested that tall grasses would present a higher insulation effect than other species in Mediterranean European cities as a consequence of the taller canopies and higher LAI values assumed for grasses (Ascione et al., 2012, Theodosiou et al., 2003). However, those models do not usually take into account differences in leaf anatomy and canopy architecture between species, which affects the insulation capacity of plant species and has been noted in this study. In this sense, biomass production, leaf area, leaf angle and the presence of flowers and fleshy leaves and/or creeping branches are plant traits that should be considered when modeling the effects of plant species in the insulation capacity of a green roof.

Differences between species were also evident when analyzing volumetric water content data. Some authors have suggested that low water consumption and some morphological traits, such as high and dense biomass, reduce water loss

through direct evaporation because of shading, enhancing the water retention capacity (Dvorak and Volder,2010; Butler and Orians,2011; Lundholm et al.,2010). Consistent with these previous results, this study reports higher values of VWC in *S. sediforme* than in the other modules, suggesting an advantage of this species in water-limited areas and when storm water management in terms of storm water runoff reduction is not a priority (Farrell et al., 2013).

Several studies have reported an effect of substrate water content on thermal regulation (Blanusa et al., 2013; Getter et al., 2011), although such an effect varies among the different reports. In this sense, some reports have shown a lower insulation capacity under no irrigation or low soil water content (Ascione et al., 2013; Blanusa et al., 2013; Getter et al., 2011; Kanellopoulou, 2008), suggesting higher temperature and higher temperature oscillations in dry substrate and a lower evapotranspiration cooling effect as a consequence of limited irrigation in green roofs. However, in this study, the opposite has been reported, as air was a better insulator than water (Zinzi and Agnoli, 2012). Our results show lower heat flux in water-limited (WL, 25 % ET₀) than in well-watered (WW, 50 % ET₀) treatments in both non-vegetated and *B. phoenicoides* modules., suggesting that the lower heat transfer with air in comparison to water would counteract the cooling effect of evapotranspiration that is supposed to be higher in the well-watered modules, where the volumetric water content is higher (Theodosiou,2003). In Mediterranean Climate areas, where water availability is one of the most limiting factors in green roof implementation, to estimate the optimal irrigation water volume to enhance plant performance and green roof ecosystem services is a key point. The present results suggest that deficit irrigation would allow both a plant surface cover close to the maximum and a low substrate VWC (i.e., a high percentage of substrate pores occupied by air), maximizing the thermal insulation capacity with a low water consumption. Moreover, the observed reductions in heat flux as an effect of water treatments were higher in bare soil than in the *B. phoenicoides* module, what would suggest that these differences between *B. phoenicoides* and bare soil can be related to plant presence, since irrigation and thus conductivity of soil are equivalent.

Previous studies in temperate and cold climates showed that the highest insulation effects of green roofs occurred during the summer (Getter et al., 2011), as, in these areas, precipitation, cloudy days, and snow cover during the cold seasons minimize the insulation effect from autumn to spring. In this study, we show that the reduction of heat flux was evidenced in all analyzed periods regardless the season, suggesting that in the Mediterranean region, with a different climatic pattern characterized by 3 to 5 months of dry season and high temperatures, a greater insulation benefit would be achieved by using green roofs (Farrell et al., 2013, Aemet, 2011).

It is necessary to note that in a green roof, the energy balance can be partitioned in sensible, latent and soil heat fluxes. The dynamics of energy partitioning are affected by climatic factors and vegetation characteristics (Santamouris, 2014), and those heat flux components respond differently to each climatic factor (Jim and He, 2010). Therefore, future experimental studies should take into account the continuous variation of climatic factors to better understand the influence of precipitation, irrigation, water use, evapotranspiration and volumetric soil water content on the green roof energy balance and insulation effect.

6.5. Conclusions

The results reported in this study show that the green roof thermal insulation capacity is potentially high throughout the year in Mediterranean climate areas. Moreover, the presence of vegetation improved the thermal insulation capacity of the green roof, with important differences between plant species. *Sedum sediforme*, despite having been reported as a low water consumer, increased the thermal insulation capacity of the green roof when compared to *Brachypodium phoenicoides*, a specie that has showed greater photosynthesis, growth and transpiration rates. In this sense, canopy architecture and leaf type seemed to determine insulation capacity to a greater extent than physiological activity (i.e., leaf photosynthesis and transpiration). Similarly, water-limited irrigation treatment (WL, 25 % ET₀) was shown to increase the thermal insulation capacity when compared to complete well-watered irrigation treatment (50 % ET₀), suggesting that the air/water substrate content has a greater effect on insulation than evapotranspiration. Those results suggest that not only height, leaf area index

and transpiration rates should be taken into account in green roof thermal insulation modeling but also that leaf morphology and anatomy as well as canopy architecture exert a great influence on green roof thermal benefits. Moreover, the optimization of water use efficiency is a key factor of green roof sustainability when water is scarce, such as in Mediterranean climate areas. In this sense the selection of those species that contribute to thermal insulation capacity in a green roof system even with limited irrigation would optimize resource use efficiency and the environmental services of green roofs.

Capítulo VII

DISCUSIÓN GENERAL

7.1 Discusión general

El hábitat natural de muchas especies nativas de la región Mediterránea está caracterizado por su alto estrés abiótico: sustratos pobres en nutrientes y/o altamente salinos, alta exposición a la radiación solar, alta exposición a vientos fuertes, entre otros. Así, la climatología de la región somete a las plantas a largos periodos de sequía y temperaturas extremas a lo largo del año. Varios estudios se han enfocado en evidenciar y explicar su elevada capacidad de adaptación a las condiciones estresantes del medio, en especial a la limitación hídrica (Galmés 2006; Medrano et al., 2007; Galmés et al.2007; Galmés et al 2010).

En este contexto, el presente estudio plantea como hipótesis que las características que han permitido a algunas especies nativas adaptarse a las condiciones ambientales Mediterráneas estresantes, les permitirán responder adecuadamente en condiciones de cubierta ajardinada extensiva caracterizadas por condiciones ambientales similares (Cook-Patton and Bauerle, 2012; Van Mechelen et al., 2015, 2014, Maclvor and Lundholm, 2011), en las que predominan el estrés hídrico, la incidencia elevada de viento y radiación y la baja disponibilidad de nutrientes.

El estudio que aquí se presenta permitió evaluar las especies nativas en función a sus respuestas y su funcionalidad ambiental en condiciones de cubierta ajardinada extensiva y disponibilidad limitada de agua, estudiando su sobrevivencia, su adecuación a condiciones de riego limitado, su valor estético y su capacidad de cobertura a largo de las estaciones del año.

Los resultados nos permiten sugerir de manera general que la presencia de vegetación, en especial la compuesta por especies adaptadas a las condiciones ambientales de la región, implica en sí una mejora de la eficiencia de los servicios ecosistémicos evaluados.

Respecto a la contribución a la reducción y retención de agua de escorrentía, la contabilización del agua drenada después de cada evento de lluvia permitió evidenciar que el sustrato sin vegetación presentó mayores cantidades de agua drenada comparándolos con los módulos vegetados, lo que sugiere el aporte de la vegetación (aunque esta depende en gran parte del volumen de lluvia) (Volder and Dvorak, 2014).

Respecto a la capacidad de regulación térmica los resultados del experimento 3 evidenciaron que la vegetación por los efectos de sombreado y evapotranspiración que genera, contribuyen de manera importante a este servicio ecosistémico de las cubiertas ajardinadas.

En conjunto, los resultados obtenidos permiten sugerir la utilidad de las especies consideradas en este estudio en la implementación de cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas en regiones Mediterráneas, así también los resultados obtenidos evidencian. Sin embargo cada caso es particular, en especial cuando se analizan sus prestaciones en función a los servicios ecosistémicos que se pretenden alcanzar, por lo que a continuación se resumen las ventajas y desventajas de cada especie con el fin de complementar y resumir la discusión detallada de cada experimento que se encuentra en los capítulos correspondientes.

Sedum sediforme es una especie convencionalmente utilizada y ampliamente estudiada (Butler and Orians, 2011; Monterusso et al., 2005; Nektarios et al., 2014) en condiciones de cubierta ajardinada, pues como otras plantas crasas tiene características metabólicas y morfológicas que permiten una adaptación adecuada al estrés hídrico y una resistencia buena a las condiciones de sequía extrema (Benvenuti and Bacci, 2010; Butler and Orians, 2011; Coutts et al., 2013; Emilsson, 2005; Grant, 2013; Maclvor and Lundholm, 2011; Nagase and Dunnett, 2010b; Price et al., 2013). Los resultados de este estudio muestran coincidencias con otros previos que indican que *S. sediforme* es capaz de alcanzar altos porcentajes de cobertura, en este caso alcanzó el 100% en un año de crecimiento. Estudios precedentes han visto que los requerimientos de consumo hídrico de esta especie son muy bajos. Los resultados obtenidos corroboran el bajo consumo de agua de esta especie en condiciones de sequía moderada y severa ($0,85$ y $0,82 \text{ l m}^{-2} \text{ día}^{-1}$, respectivamente), y un promedio de $1,32 \text{ l m}^{-2} \text{ día}^{-1}$ aplicando un riego limitado a lo largo de los meses de verano. Esta capacidad supone un ahorro hídrico muy bien valorado en regiones donde el agua es un recurso limitante (García-Navarro et al., 2004; Van Mechelen et al., 2015a).

Sedum sediforme tiene un crecimiento comparativamente lento respecto a otras especies de porte subarborescente (Butler and Orians, 2011; Dunnett et al., 2008; Young et al., 2014), sin embargo, la producción acumulada en dos años fue mayor que la de las otras especies estudiadas. Adicionalmente es importante

mencionar que la biomasa producida por esta especie no se redujo significativamente en condiciones de riego deficitario. Se cuenta con evidencias de la influencia de la biomasa sobre la capacidad térmica del sistema de cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas (Bevilacqua et al., 2015; Blanusa et al., 2013; Theodosiou, 2003), y sobre la capacidad de brindar una estructura eficiente para la retención de agua (Schroll et al., 2011). Estos dos beneficios ambientales han sido evaluados en la presente tesis. Se ha evidenciado que la arquitectura de *S. sediforme*, es decir la disposición y características de su follaje, contribuye a la capacidad de regulación térmica del sistema y, al no verse afectada a lo largo del año, *S. sediforme* permite la reducción de energía disipada del sistema en flujo de calor entre el 86% y el 82% a lo largo de las estaciones del año, contribuyendo de manera eficiente a su capacidad aislante. Así también, en relación con la capacidad de regulación térmica, se ha mostrado que un menor volumen de contenido hídrico en el suelo permite una mayor reducción del flujo de calor del sistema (Castleton et al., 2010; Zinzi and Agnoli, 2012). En la mayoría de las especies esto involucraría un desmedro a otros beneficios (cobertura de planta y estética) (Bevilacqua et al., 2015), sin embargo, como se ha mencionado antes, estos parámetros no se ven afectados en *S. sediforme* por la reducción del riego, lo que sugiere que esta especie es una opción altamente eficiente para potenciar la regulación térmica que ofrecen las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas.

En relación a la funcionalidad ambiental de gestión de agua de escorrentía, es necesario recordar que este beneficio ecosistémico se da por: i) la reducción de pérdida de agua de escorrentía de una cubierta vegetada y por ii) la detención del volumen de agua de escorrentía (retención temporal del agua y reducción del caudal), ambos procesos permiten aliviar el impacto sobre los sistemas hídricos urbanos impermeables (Fioretti, 2010).

En este contexto, se ha evidenciado que *S. sediforme* puede reducir su consumo de agua, lo que limitaría la capacidad de reducción de agua de escorrentía (Graceson et al., 2013; Rayner et al., 2016; Farrell, 2013), sin embargo en este estudio, se ha visto que *S. sediforme*, en periodos de alta disponibilidad hídrica no reporta un gasto significativamente menor con respecto a las demás especies, probablemente por su condición de CAM facultativa que le permite comportarse como especie C₃ en condiciones de buen abastecimiento hídrico

(Benvenuti and Bacci, 2010; Blanusa et al., 2013; Farrell et al., 2013; Monterusso et al., 2005), lo cual permite sugerirla como especie útil cuando la reducción de agua de escorrentía es deseada como servicio ecosistémico de la cubierta ajardinada extensiva.

Por otrolado, *S. sediforme* ha mostrado conservar un volumen hídrico del suelo mayor con respecto a *B. phoenicoides* y a los módulos no vegetados, a lo largo del año y después de los eventos de lluvia, lo que supone una ventaja a la hora de retener el agua de escorrentía, retrasar y reducir los picos de caudal de agua de tormentas en comparación con un suelo no vegetado un tejado convencional, El valor estético de *S. sediforme* ha mostrado una óptima evolución, así mismo se han registrado picos altos de apariencia relativa (RA) de esta especie debido a la presencia de flores a lo largo de los meses de junio, julio y parte de agosto, lo que además se considera óptimo como una oportunidad para brindar hábitats para insectos, lo que permitiría un incremento de la biodiversidad en zonas urbanas. Por otra parte, y a pesar de que a lo largo del año *S. sediforme* no produce biomasa senescente, la senescencia de sus flores al final de la época de floración podría representar una necesidad de mantenimiento debido a la disminución de la calidad estética que provoca dicha senescencia.

La selección de especies alternativas a las crasas ha sido ya un propósito de investigación, así, diversos estudios han evidenciado la adecuación de otras especies herbáceas y subarborescentes en la implementación de cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas, entre las que se han destacado varias gramíneas por sus capacidades para sobrevivir en condiciones de cubierta vegetada (Benvenuti and Bacci, 2010; Blanusa et al., 2013; Farrell et al., 2013; Maclvor and Lundholm, 2011; Maclvor et al., 2013, 2011; Eksi, 2017; Schweitzer and Erell, 2014), de resistir condiciones de sequía, desempeñando un rol eficiente en la regulación térmica (Ascione et al., 2013; Kanellopoulou, 2008) y de retener agua de escorrentía (Farrell et al., 2013; Maclvor et al., 2013; Maclvor and Lundholm, 2011; Nagase and Dunnett, 2010b).

Este estudio ha incluido dos gramíneas nativas mediterráneas y de éstas *Brachypodium phoenicoides* se ha destacado por su valor estético óptimo y relativamente estable a lo largo de la experimentación. *Brachypodium phoenicoides* mostró buena apariencia en cuanto a forma, color y turgor durante el verano, manteniendo incluso unos valores aceptables de RA en condiciones

de sequía moderada y severa. A pesar de que la regulación estomática, y el consecuente incremento de eficiencia en el uso del agua a nivel de hoja, han sido descritos como mecanismos eficientes de adaptación al déficit hídrico (Flexas and Medrano, 2002; Medrano et al 2003; Medrano et al., 2009; Poni et al. 2009), esta especie mantuvo valores bajos de conductancia estomática y de fotosíntesis independientemente de la disponibilidad hídrica, lo que sugiere que *B. phoenicoides* entraría en una obligada dormancia estival, ya observada en especies del mismo género, y que le permitiría mantener una parte de su biomasa aérea verde aún en condiciones de déficit hídrico severo (Dvorak and Volder, 2010; Holmes, 1996; Voltaire et al., 1998; Voltaire and Norton, 2006).

Evidentemente la reducción de biomasa de *B. phoenicoides* a consecuencia de la sequía severa y moderada ha sido reportada en el experimento de corta duración, sugiriendo su limitación a efectos de propiciar una mejora de la reducción de flujo de calor y retención de agua de escorrentía, sin embargo, esta suposición se rechaza en el experimento a largo plazo, en el que *B. phoenicoides* no disminuye de manera significativa su producción de biomasa con riego limitado. Así mismo manifiesta un valor estético adecuado y estable a lo largo del verano sin producir cantidades elevadas de biomasa senescente. Estos resultados, aparentemente contradictorios, indicarían que los grados de estrés alcanzados en ambos estudios fueron diferentes, de forma que las plantas crecidas en macetas (estudio de corta duración) habrían sufrido un déficit hídrico más intenso que las plantas crecidas en los módulos experimentales.

Así mismo, *B. phoenicoides* contribuyó a la regulación térmica de una cubierta ajardinada extensiva, habiéndose evidenciado una reducción significativa del flujo de calor respecto al sustrato sin vegetación en las cuatro estaciones del año. Efectivamente la reducción de flujo de calor fue mayor en *S.sediforme*, sin embargo *B. phoenicoides* redujo la pérdida de calor en invierno, alcanzando un 100% respecto al suelo sin vegetación, lo que sugiere un desempeño eficiente de esta especie en la regulación térmica en invierno.

Estudios precedentes reportan que el efecto de aislamiento térmico de las cubiertas puede estar limitado en invierno (Bavilacqua et al.,2015; Getter et al., 2011), sin embargo, los datos del experimento 3 muestran óptimos resultados de regulación térmica en invierno, probablemente debido a las características climáticas del invierno mediterráneo: temperaturas suaves con frecuentes días

de sol. Además, se observa la influencia del buen estado de las plantas (turgor y cobertura óptimos) registrado a lo largo de esta estación.

Por otra parte, así como se ha visto en otras gramíneas (Ascione et al., 2013; Lundholm et al., 2010; Theodosiou, 2003, Eksi et al., 2017) tanto la estructura que forman las raíces y la arquitectura de *B. phoenicoides*, como la capacidad de esta especie de regular su consumo hídrico y de consumir cantidades relativamente elevadas de agua cuando ésta está disponible, sugieren su adecuada funcionalidad a la hora de aliviar los sistemas hídricos urbanos con la reducción y la retención de agua de escorrentía, sin que esto afecte a la cobertura y al valor estético; lo que hace interesante la selección de esta especie para mejorar la gestión del agua de escorrentía.

A pesar de lo expuesto, *B. phoenicoides* mostró un decremento en cuanto a su apariencia realtiva debido principalmente a la acumulación de abundante biomasa senescente, con un porcentaje de biomasa verde menor al 10%, hojas poco turgentes y forma no compacta en los últimos meses de experimentación, lo que sugeriría la necesidad de un desbroce de la cubierta en momentos puntuales del año que permitiera el mantenimiento del valor estético de la misma. En este estudio, *S. pungens* ha mostrado una repuesta adecuada en condiciones de sequía moderada y severa, una buena capacidad de cobertura del terreno, alcanzando un 100% al final del experimento 2, y una buena apariencia en cuanto color y turgor. Estos resultados coinciden con otros que sugieren que las plantas con metabolismo C₄ son de interés para ajardinamiento en zonas de Clima Mediterráneo por su capacidad de lidiar con la sequía (Boden et al., 2013; Toscano et al., 2015). Sin embargo, este metabolismo fotosintético limita su rendimiento de forma importante a temperaturas inferiores a los 20°C, explicando así el bajo rendimiento y el decaimiento de la apariencia de esta especie durante los meses de invierno. Resulta importante destacar dos aspectos relacionados con esta especie: i) la distribución del porcentaje de cobertura por color con bajos porcentajes de tonalidades verde a lo largo de todo el año; lo que en primavera, otoño y verano no se debe a una falta de turgor ni a un exceso de biomasa senescente, sino a una tonalidad plomiza azulada de sus hojas, esto, si bien reportaría negativamente en la apreciación estética convencional, es un elemento interesante al valorar la capacidad de incrementar el albedo. Otros trabajos han mostrado similares efectos con otras especies no crasas (Maclvor

and Lundholm, 2011) que por su coloración reflejan más radiación que una superficie asfaltada, una cubierta convencional o incluso que la vegetación forestal u otra caracterizada por verdes intensos (Kolokotsa et al., 2013), habiéndose visto que el incremento del albedo resulta beneficioso en la reducción del efecto de isla de calor de las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas (Akbari and Konopacki, 2005; Jarrett et al., 2007; L. L. H. Peng and Jim, 2013; Sharma et al., 2016). ii) Esta especie es capaz de producir estolones que permiten la colonización del espacio circúndate con una gran eficiencia, esta característica es apreciada pero resulta en un riesgo de daño potencial a la infraestructura y a los componentes del sistema debido a su gran capacidad para atravesar materiales blandos y para ensanchar grietas.

Crithmum maritimum, *Limonium virgatum* y *Asteriscus maritimus* son especies seleccionadas por su hábitat de procedencia, son especies capaces de adecuarse a las condiciones estresantes en hábitats costeros y de resistir largas temporadas de sequía. En este estudio, como en otros precedentes (Ondoño et al., 2015; Vestrella et al., 2015), se ha observado una respuesta adecuada a la sequía y un valor estético no despreciable de estas especies, sin embargo, su selección como alternativa preferente para la implementación de las cubiertas ajardinadas debería considerar una serie de factores que difieren según la especie y que se comentan a continuación.

Asteriscus maritimus, alcanzó altos valores de apariencia relativa otorgada principalmente por la presencia de flores durante los primeros meses del periodo estival, por su altura y forma adecuada, sin embargo, también sufrió una importante caída de la RA a consecuencia del riego deficitario, manifestada por la pérdida de turgor y la alta producción de biomasa senescente que en este estudio alcanzó casi el 40% en condiciones de sequía severa. Este comportamiento ha sido reportado por estudios precedentes (Vestrella, 2015) y puede ser también observado en su hábitat natural por lo que si se selecciona esta especie debe considerarse el gasto de mantenimiento y riego a capacidad de campo para optimizar su desempeño.

Limonium virgatum mostró un porcentaje de cobertura adecuado a lo largo de la experimentación y su necesidad de mantenimiento fue limitada, sin embargo su valor estético presentó oscilaciones importantes por su cambio de coloración a lo largo del año, la pérdida de sus hojas verdes y el periodo de floración. Así

también, se destaca que *L. virgatum* mantuvo un forma compacta, esta característica entre otras propias de su morfología resulta interesante para regular la pérdida de agua (Galmés et al., 2005; Medrano et al., 2009; Vestrella et al., 2015) y de brindar una arquitectura que podría favorecer la regulación térmica en las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas de esta región.

CONCLUSIONES

8.1 Conclusiones

La presente tesis doctoral ha permitido mejorar el entendimiento del funcionamiento de 6 especies nativas en cuanto a su implantación sobre cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas en regiones de clima mediterráneo. La experimentación llevada a cabo en periodos de corta y larga duración permitió arribar a conclusiones sobre cada una de las especies estudiadas, en cuanto a su respuesta a las condiciones típicas del sistema de cubierta ajardinada extensiva y a los efectos de la aplicación de riego limitado, así como a los largo de las estaciones del año.

A continuación, se enuncian las conclusiones específicas de la presente tesis doctoral:

1. *S. sediforme* respondió adecuadamente a las condiciones de riego deficitario, habiendo mostrado: alto y estable valor estético, óptimo porcentaje de cobertura de planta, cobertura verde adecuada a lo largo del año y bajo consumo hídrico, por lo que su implementación en cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas contribuiría al valor estético de las mismas. Por otro lado, su bajo consumo hídrico en verano, su crecimiento lento y la baja producción de biomasa senescente permitirían un menor costo de mantenimiento y posibilitaría el uso sostenible de agua para riego.
2. *Brachypodium phoenicoides* y *Sedum sediforme* fueron capaces de regular su consumo hídrico, reduciendo la cantidad de agua consumida en condiciones de déficit hídrico e incrementando su consumo cuando aumentó su disponibilidad. Por otro lado, la producción de biomasa de ambas especies no se vio afectada por la limitación de agua de riego, este comportamiento confiere a las cubiertas en que vegeten la capacidad para mejorar: i) la capacidad de retención de agua de escorrentía y ii) la capacidad de almacenar carbono.
3. *Sporobolus pungens* y *Limonium virgatum* mostraron habilidades para lidiar con el déficit hídrico, manteniendo su valor estético, porcentaje de

cobertura y producción de biomasa. Esta capacidad les confiere potencial para su adecuación a las condiciones de cubierta ajardinada extensiva. Sin embargo, es necesario considerar que las mismas sufren importantes cambios en la coloración, cobertura y valor estético a lo largo del año, en especial durante el invierno, lo que limitó su interés estético durante esa estación.

4. La capacidad de aislamiento térmico de las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas resultó ser potencialmente alta en regiones con clima Mediterráneo a lo largo de las cuatro estaciones del año. La presencia de vegetación influyó de manera importante en la capacidad de aislamiento de las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas.
5. *Sedum sediforme* y *B. phoenicoides* mostraron la capacidad de reducir la oscilación térmica y el flujo del calor en un sistema de cubierta ajardinada extensiva, mejorando su capacidad de aislamiento térmico. No obstante, esta capacidad fue mayor en los módulos vegetados con *S. sediforme* que en los vegetados con *B. phoenicoides*. *Esto evidenció que* el tipo de hoja, la densidad del follaje y el sombreado que proporcionan, tienen una mayor influencia sobre la regulación térmica del sistema que la disipación de calor por evapotranspiración.
6. La reducción del volumen de agua de riego disminuyó el flujo de calor a través del sistema independientemente de la presencia o no de vegetación en la cubierta y del tipo de ésta.
7. *B. phoenicoides*, *C. maritimum*, *L. virgatum*, y *S. pungens* pueden ser consideradas como especies alternativas para la implantación de cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas en zonas de clima mediterráneo, siendo capaces de brindar servicios ecosistémicos eficientemente según sus respectivas prestaciones y permitiendo una gestión sostenible del agua.

8. Las especies estudiadas mostraron distintas estrategias de adaptación ante una limitada disponibilidad de agua, lo que permitió que sus respuestas en cuanto a su rendimiento como componentes de las cubiertas ajardinadas (valor estético, porcentaje de cobertura, capacidad de retención de agua y aislamiento térmico) no se vean afectadas de manera importante y permita la práctica de un riego sostenible en este tipo de estructuras.

9. Las 6 especies estudiadas dadas sus características morfológicas y fisiológicas, mostraron en general respuestas favorables a las condiciones de cubierta ajardinada extensiva implementada en regiones con clima Mediterráneo: alto porcentaje de cobertura de planta, valor estético alto, y bajas necesidades de mantenimiento y riego, lo que lo que permite sugerir su implementación como componentes de este sistema constructivo.

10. Se ha evidenciado que el diferente comportamiento de las especies determina su influencia sobre la funcionalidad ambiental de las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas por lo que, su selección debe guiarse en función de los servicios ecosistémicos que interese priorizar.

8.2 Perspectivas de investigación futura

La experimentación desarrollada y el monitoreo integral de las especies involucradas posibilitan estructurar ideas que guíen la investigación futura, ampliando la información obtenida y superando las limitaciones metodológicas y materiales que esta tesis ha hecho frente. En este sentido:

Existen 19 especies consideradas inicialmente por su potencial adecuación en condiciones de cubierta ajardinada extensiva, se considera que la investigación futura puede basarse en una segunda selección entre éstas, para ampliar la caracterización de especies nativas aplicando la metodología utilizada en esta tesis.

El monitoreo experimental de 2 años de duración ha permitido identificar parámetros no cuantificados en este estudio que resultan importantes para una caracterización más amplia de las especies y de su funcionalidad; entre éstos están:

- La cuantificación de la contribución de las especies como hábitats de insectos.
- La cuantificación, a largo plazo, de la biomasa senescente considerando las diferentes especies, la influencia del riego limitado y la estacionalidad.
- La cuantificación de la capacidad de autopropagación y colonización de las especies.

En cuanto a la evaluación de la capacidad aislante de las cubiertas ajardinadas extensivas, habiendo evidenciado la influencia de la arquitectura de la planta y la contribución de la vegetación y del riego limitado se sugiere experimentar con especies nativas resistentes a la sequía y con forma almohadillada como *L. virgatum* u otras especies de este género.

En lo que se refiera al manejo del agua escorrentía, la cuatificación realizada de agua drenada a lo largo de dos años de experimentación, permitió obtener datos de los factores que influyen en este parámetro (tamaño de lluvia, especie, tipo de riego y volumen de contenido hídrico previo al evento de lluvia), por lo que se considera el análisis futuro de la contribución de las especies y la influencia de otros factores sobre este servicio ecosistémico.

El estudio realizado pone énfasis en la particularidad de cada una de las especies estudiadas, remarcando que cada una es capaz de contribuir de manera distinta a los servicios ecosistémicos potenciales de las cubiertas ajardinadas, por ende resulta interesante estudiar la interacción entre las especies consideradas, a fin de evaluar su desempeño y eficiencia en condiciones de cubierta ajardinada pluriespecífica, así como de su funcionalidad ambiental.

En general, el monitoreo se basó en el desempeño de las especies en módulos experimentales, sin embargo un monitoreo experimental en condiciones de cubierta ajardinada extensiva real, sin duda aportaría información valiosa e indispensable para promover los beneficios de la implementación de esta técnica con mejor aceptación en la región Mediterránea.

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