

Are we breaking the EMEP model? Unexpected results from local land use changes

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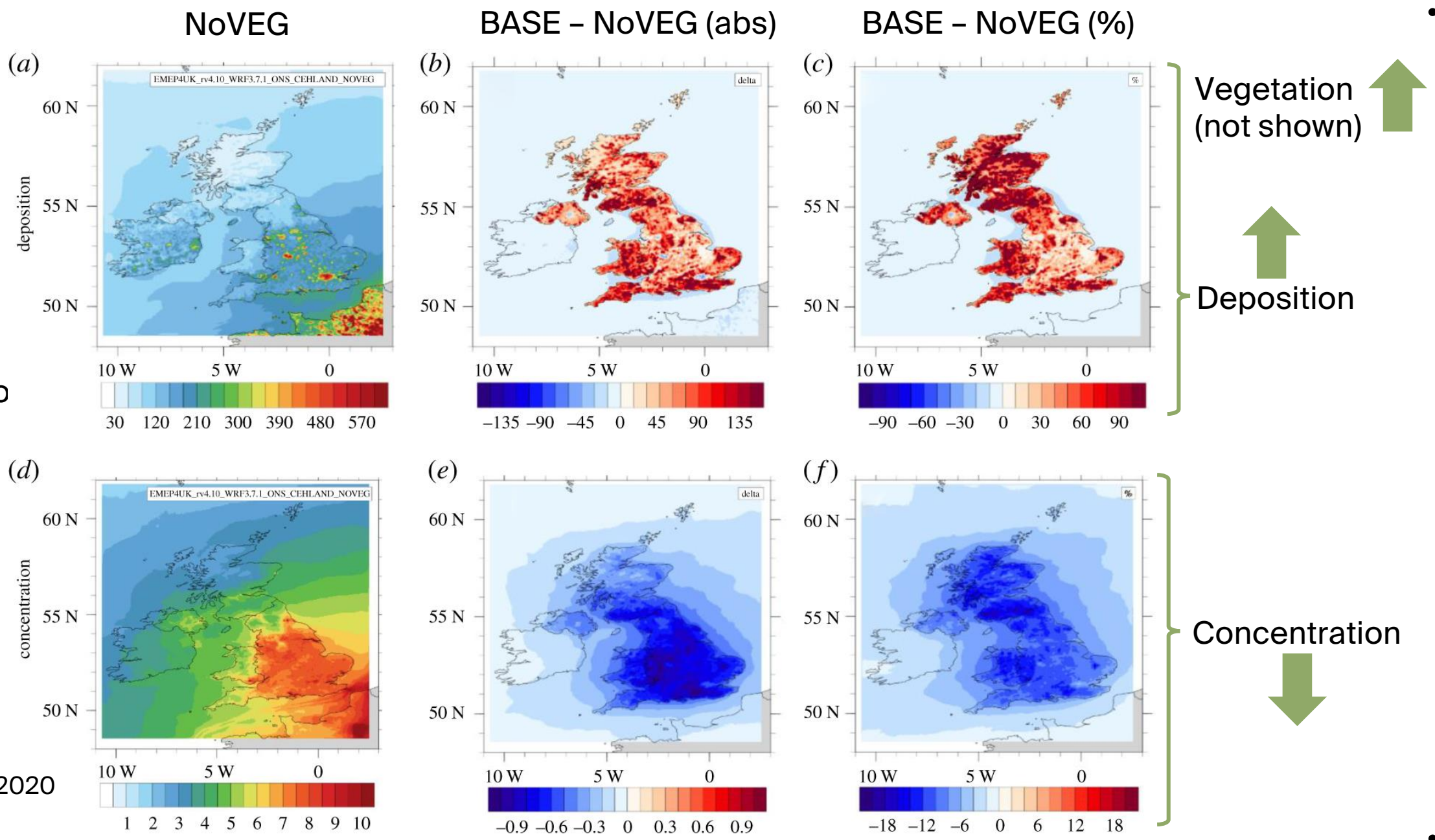
29.04.2026
27th EMEP TFMM meeting



• EMEPrv4.10
5 × 6 km²

For 2015

NoVEG:
all UK
vegetation
land cover
converted to
desert

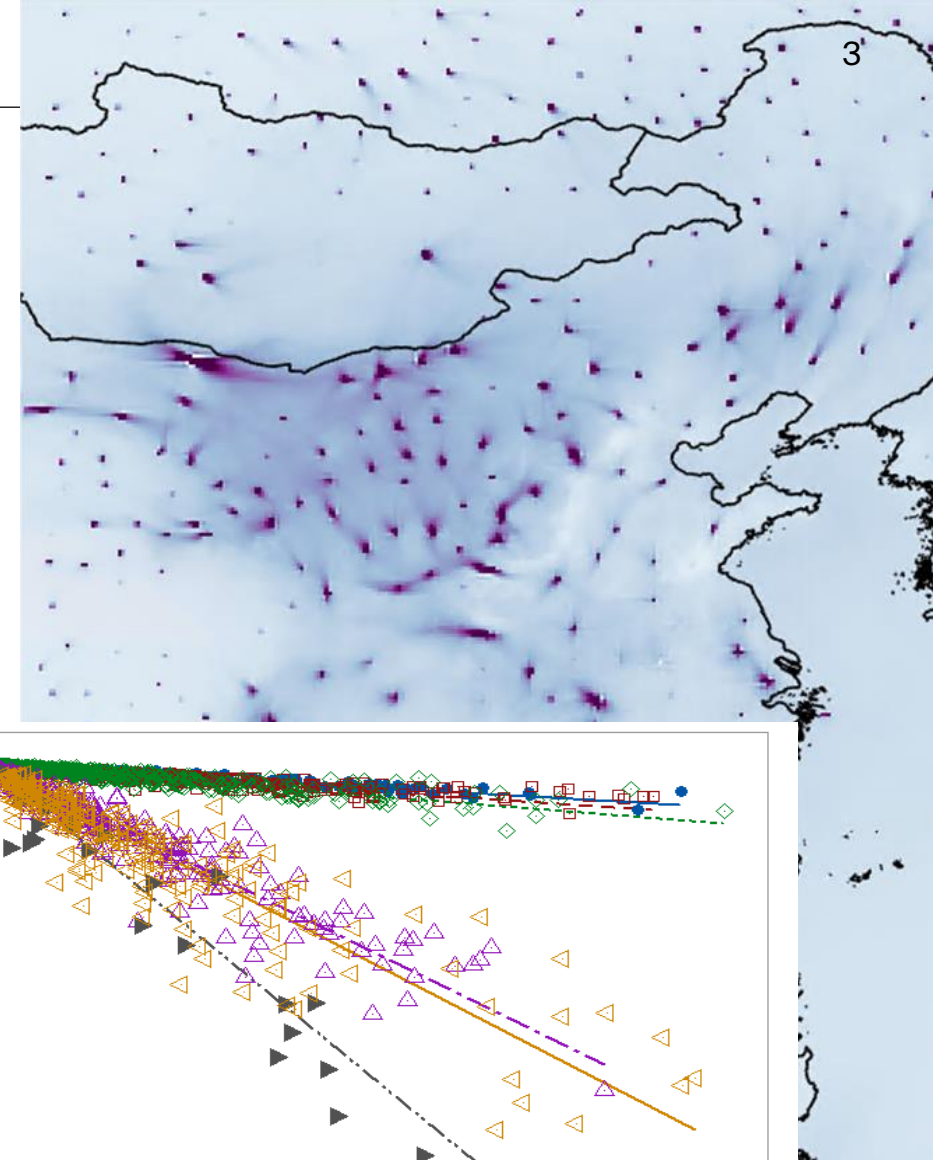
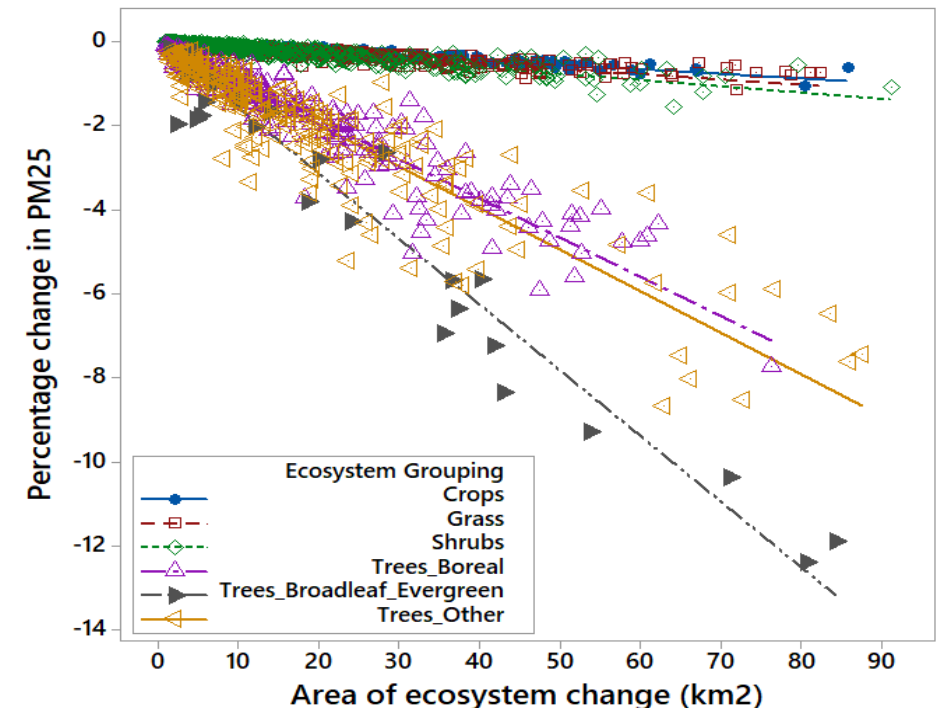


Scenario design to create bespoke meta-models

Selectively manipulate land cover in central cells to:

1. Extract role of e.g. tree cover, grassland on $PM_{2.5}$ concentrations
2. Separately calculate distance of 'transferred benefit'

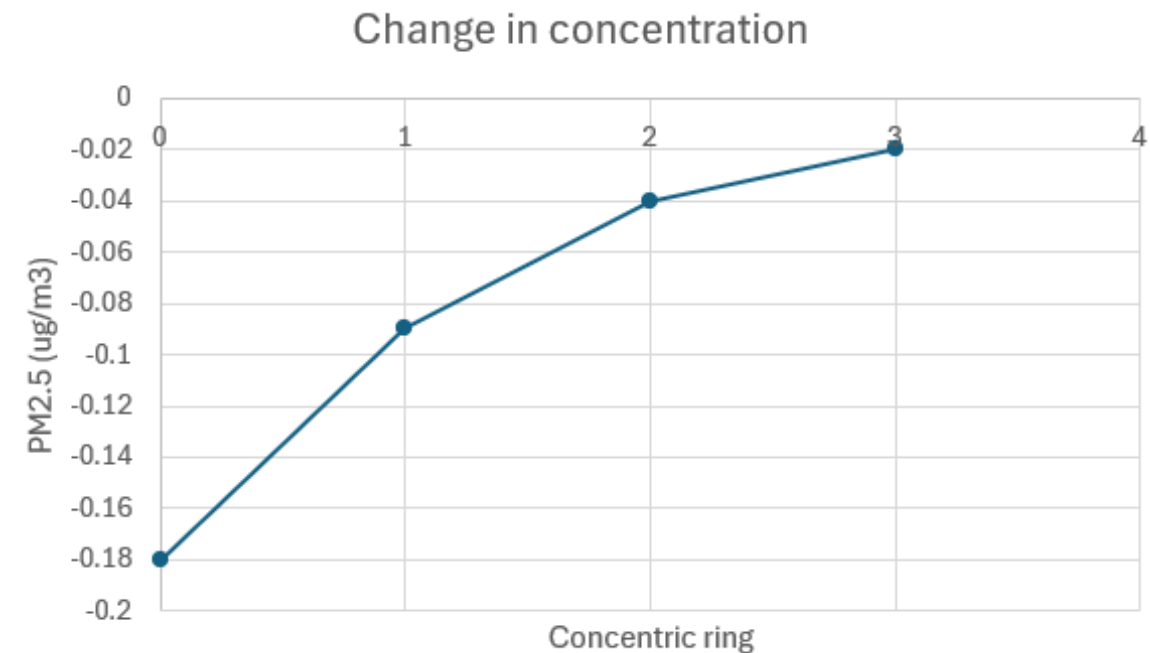
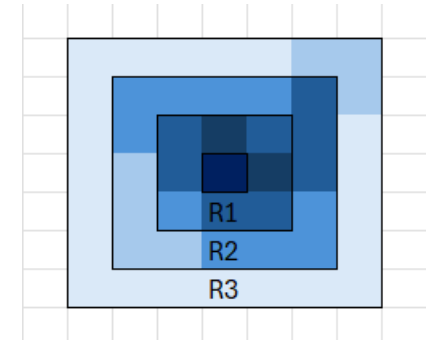
*Effect of scenario comparison over East Asia ...
& resulting equations, using central cell results,
for role of land cover in reducing $PM_{2.5}$*



Calculating distance of ‘transported benefits’, i.e. how much does an intervention benefit neighbouring areas?

Expected effect (illustrated using dummy data):

1. Reduction of PM_{2.5} due to e.g. trees is greatest in central cell
2. Some reduction of PM_{2.5} in neighbouring cells, reducing with distance
3. (Likely to see directional effects from dominant pollution direction)



Our Setup: Meteorology

WRF4.4.2 (Skamarock et al., 2019)
for 2021 nudged to ERA5

Projection: lat lon

Using WRF for dynamic
downscaling of meteorology

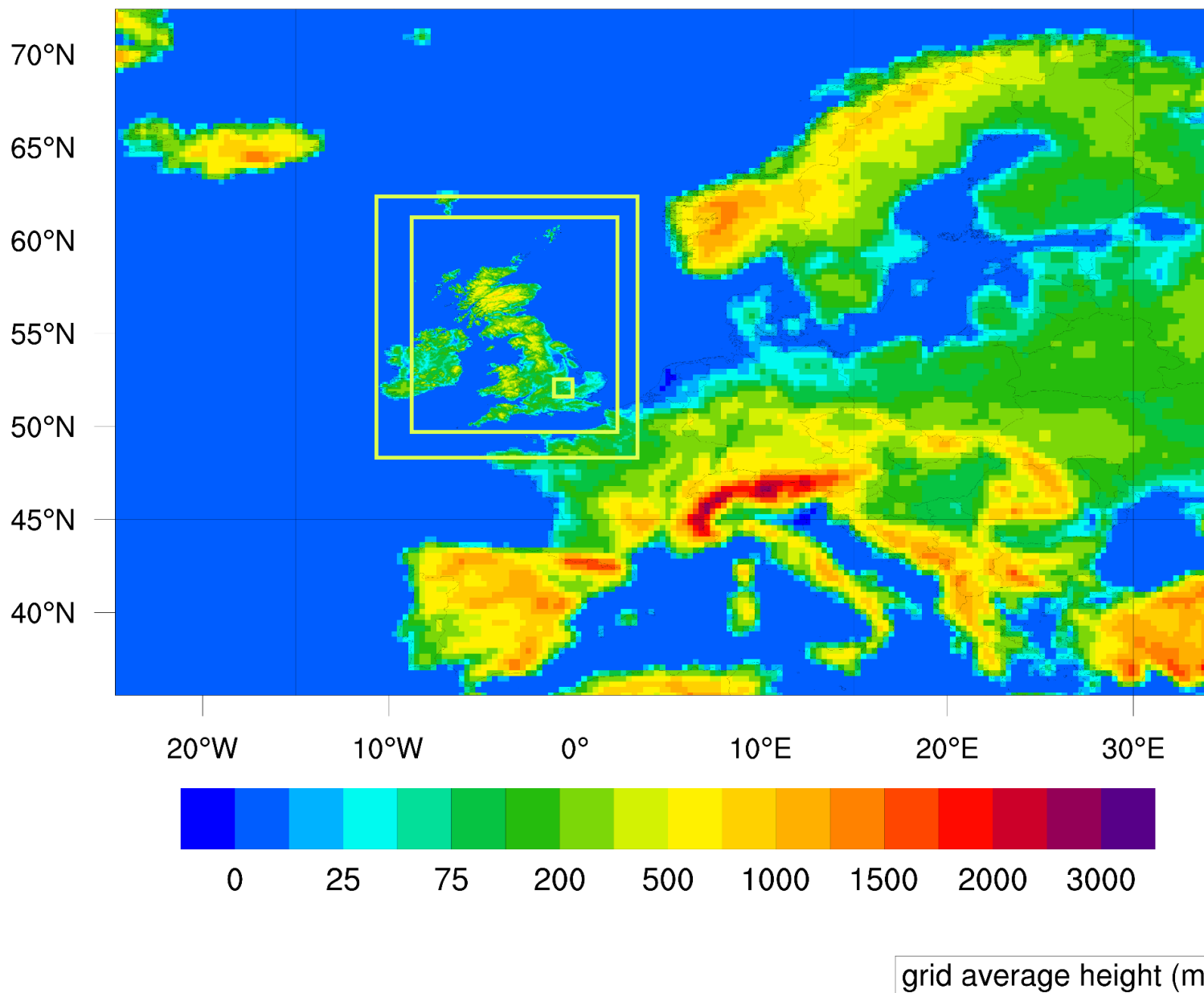
EU ~ 0.3° x 0.3°

BI ~ 0.1° x 0.1°

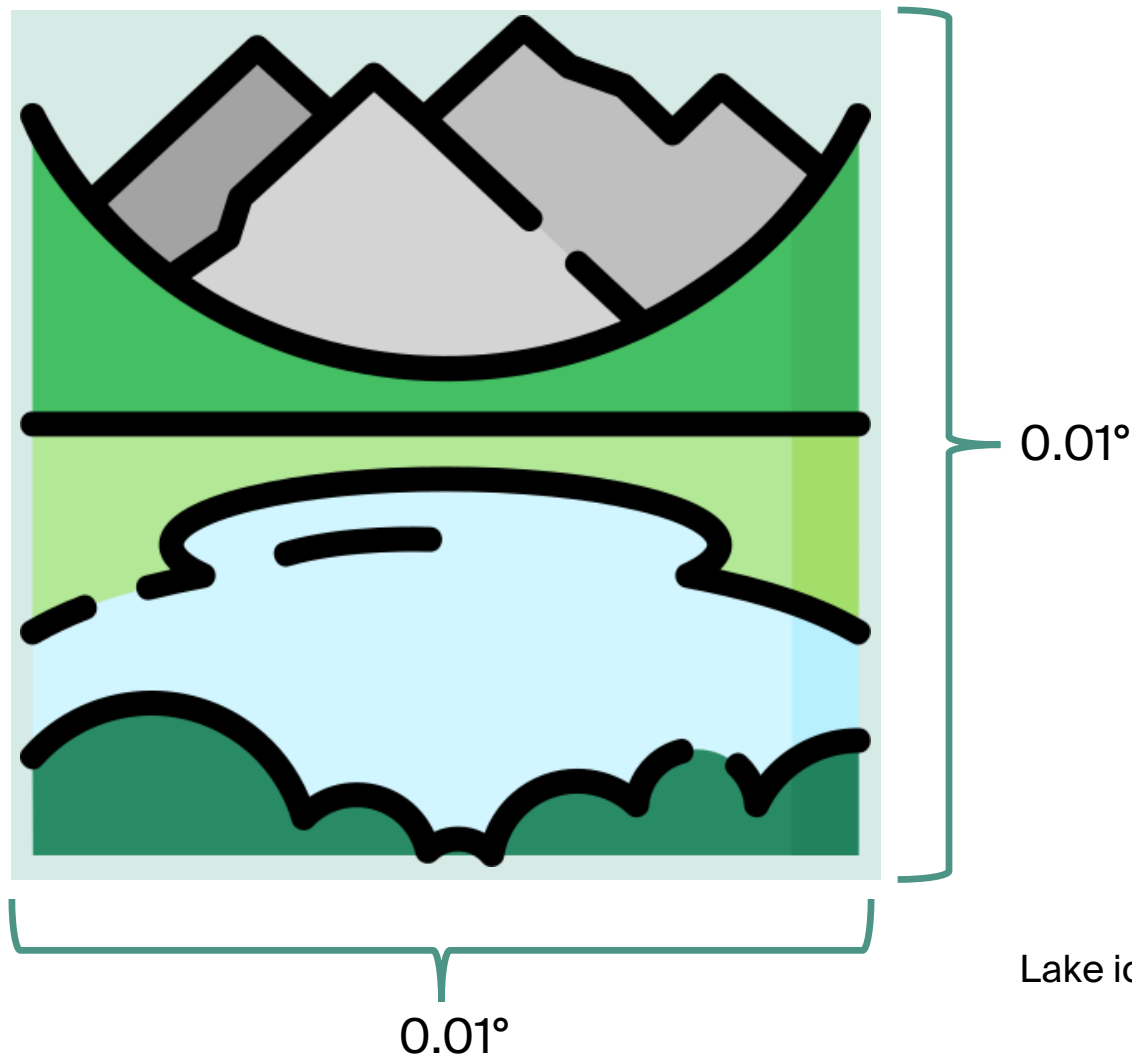
UK ~ 0.03° x 0.03°

BD ~ 0.01° x 0.01°
~ 1.1 km x 0.8 km

WRF output used to drive
EMEP rv5.0 (Simpson et al., 2012;
Vieno et al., 2016)



Mosaic approach for sub-grid variability

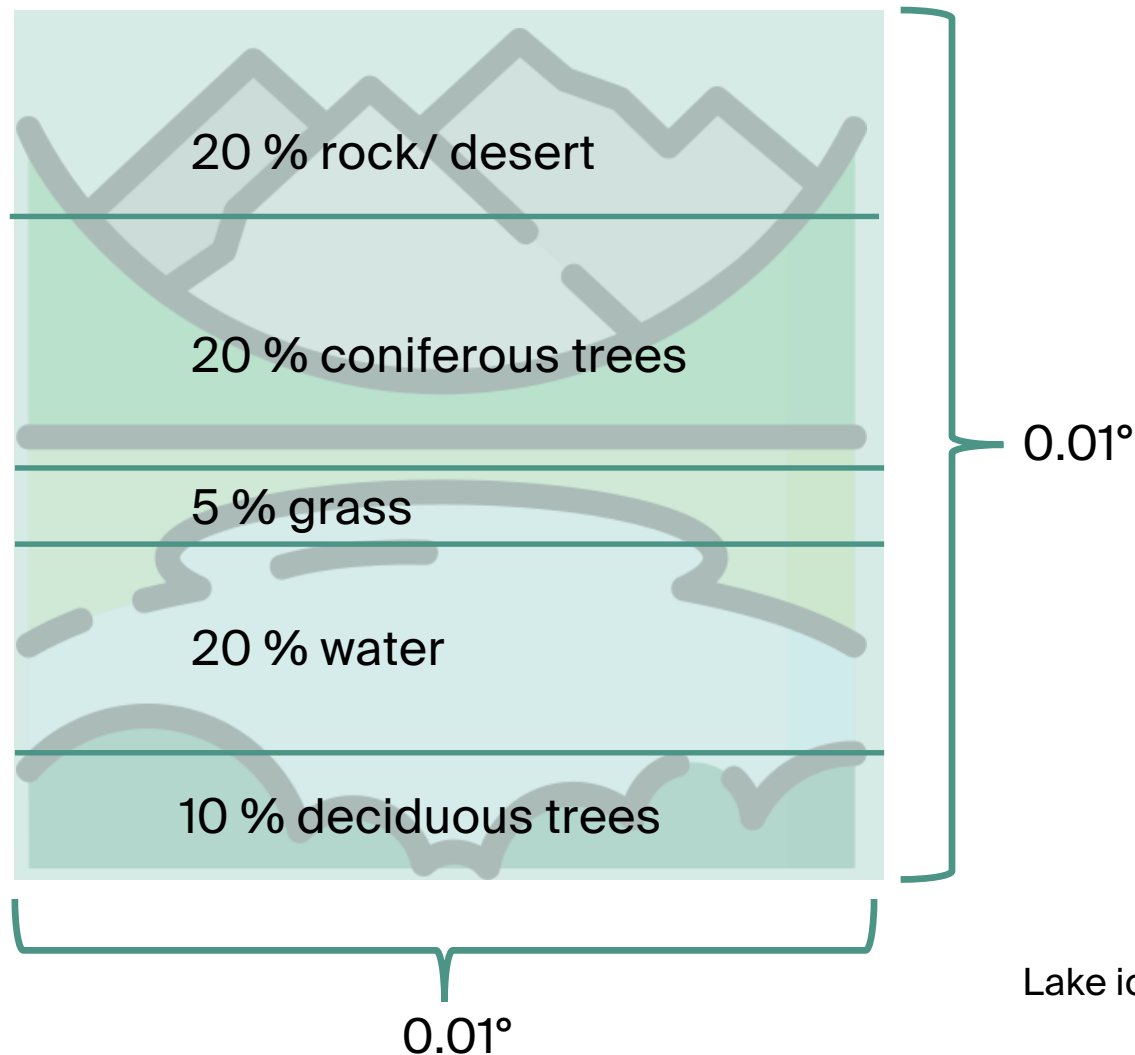


Model calculates grid average values valid for the horizontal grid

Mosaic approach can be used to represent variability within the grid cell

Lake icons created by Freepik - Flaticon

Mosaic approach for sub-grid variability



Model calculates grid average values valid for the horizontal grid

Mosaic approach can be used to represent variability within the grid cell

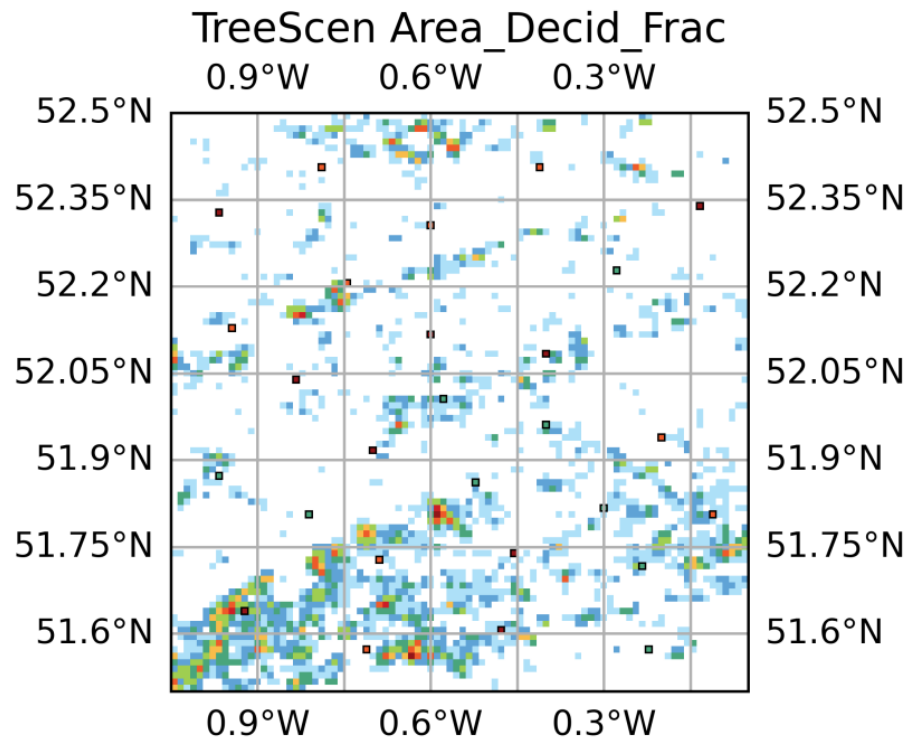
Deposition velocity V_g calculated per land cover k , then summed up per grid using land cover fraction f_k for compound i

$$\widetilde{V}_g^i(z) = \sum_{k=1}^N f_k V_{g,k}^i(z)$$

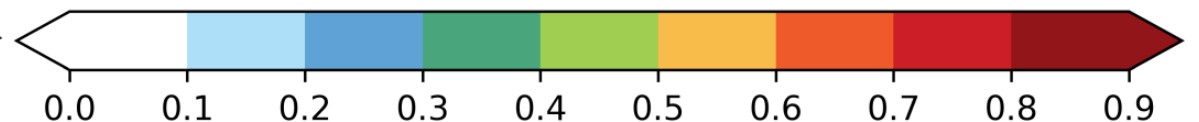
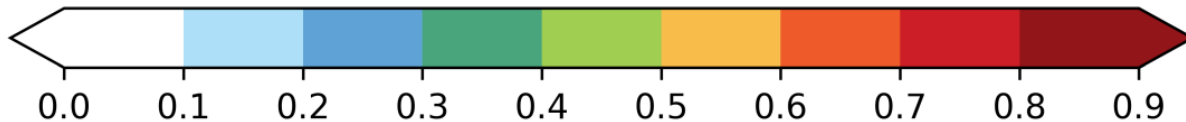
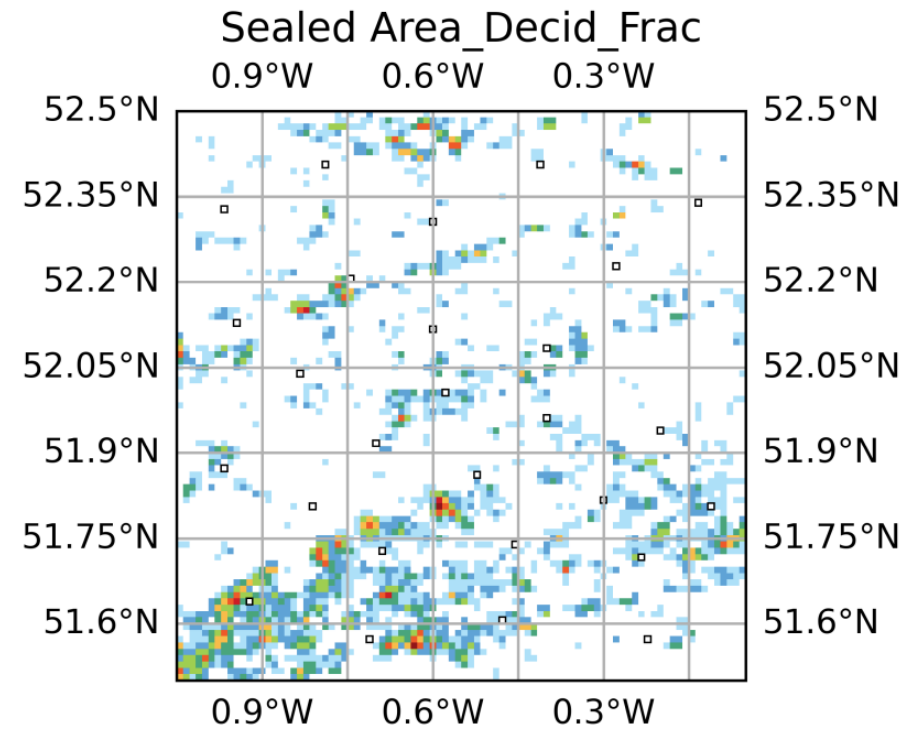
Land cover scenarios

Changing land cover (LC) in specific grid boxes
All sealed bare land (~ desert) → ... → all deciduous trees

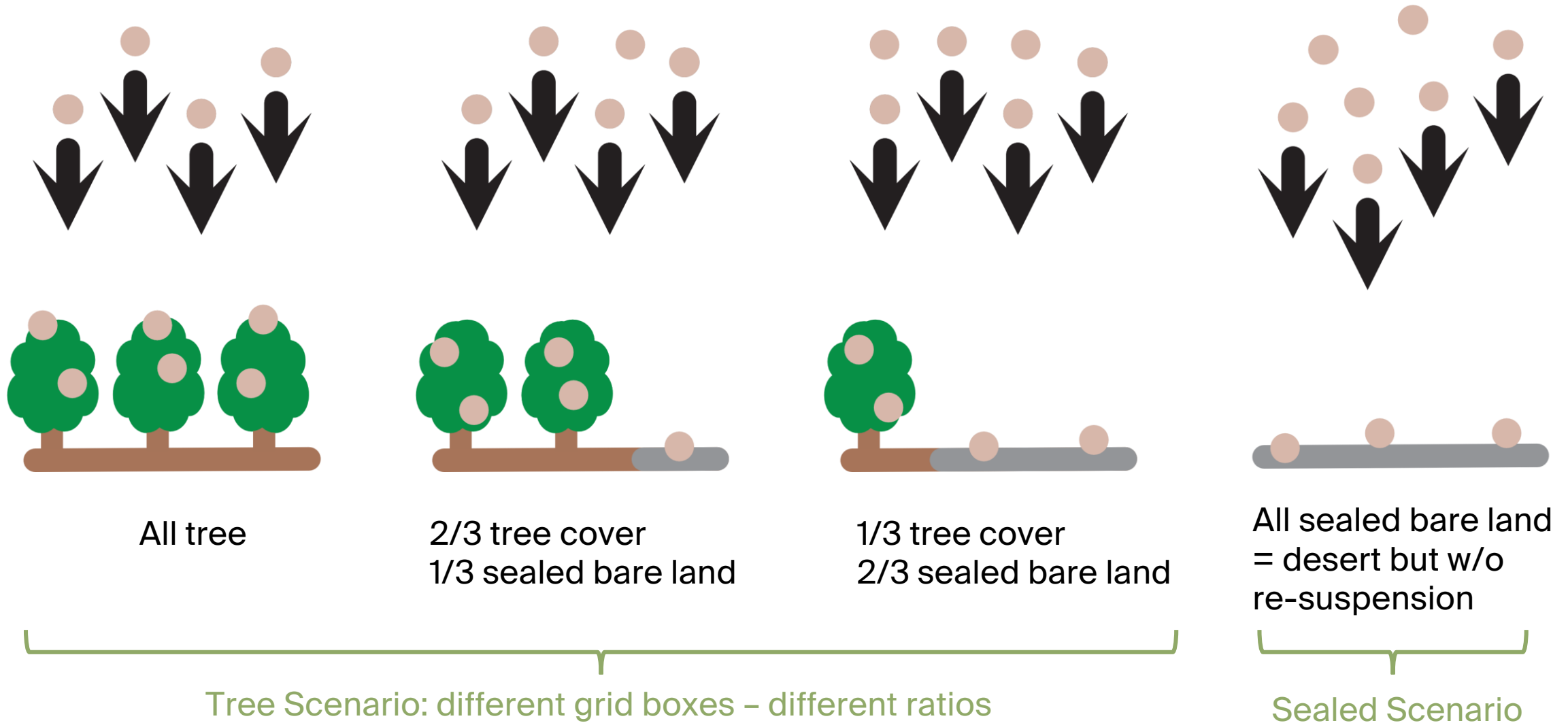
Tree Scenario

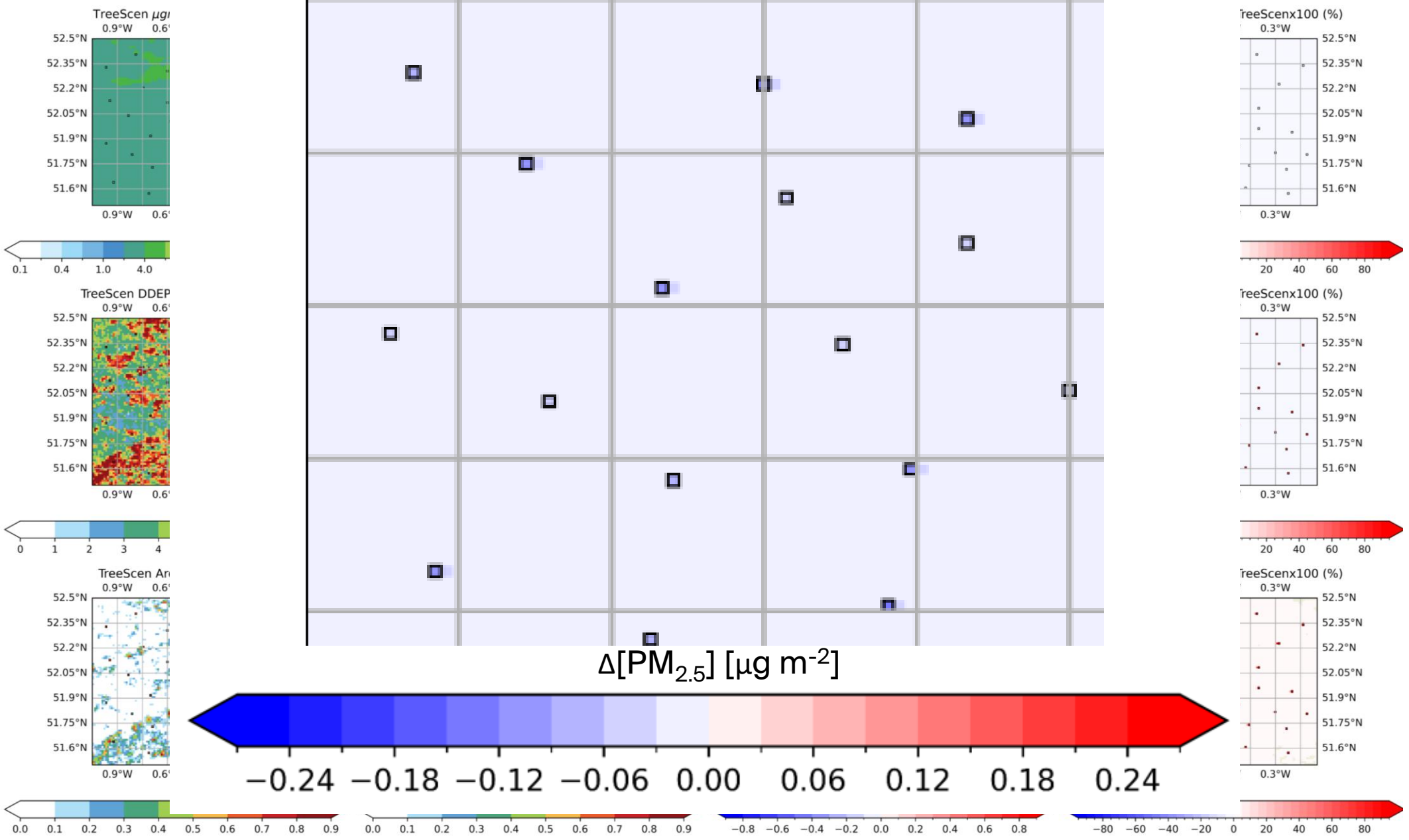


Sealed Scenario



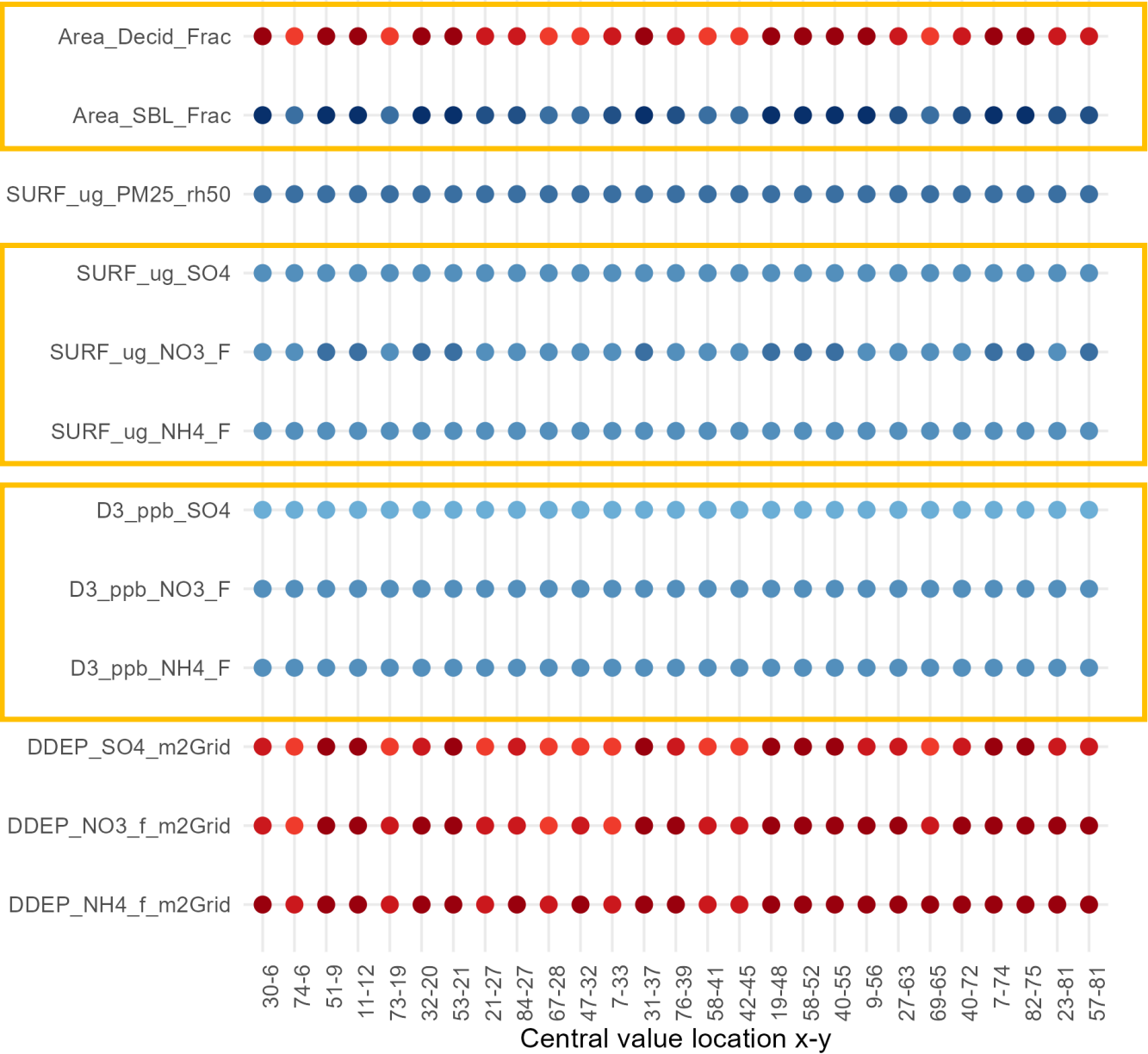
Different grid boxes with different ratios of LC



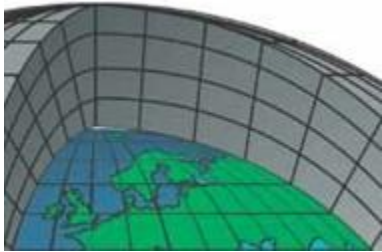
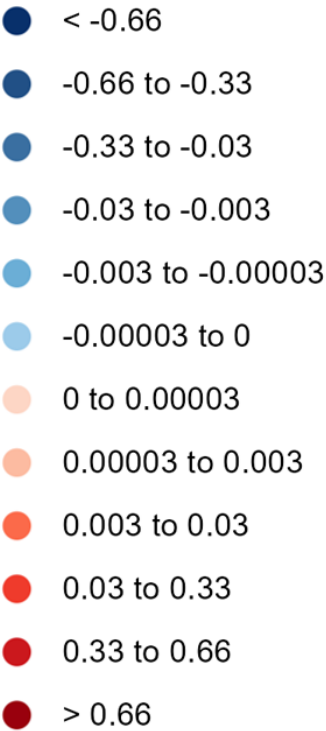


May

PM_{2.5} =
SO₄ +
NO_{3,f} +
NH_{4,f} + ...



week
absolute difference

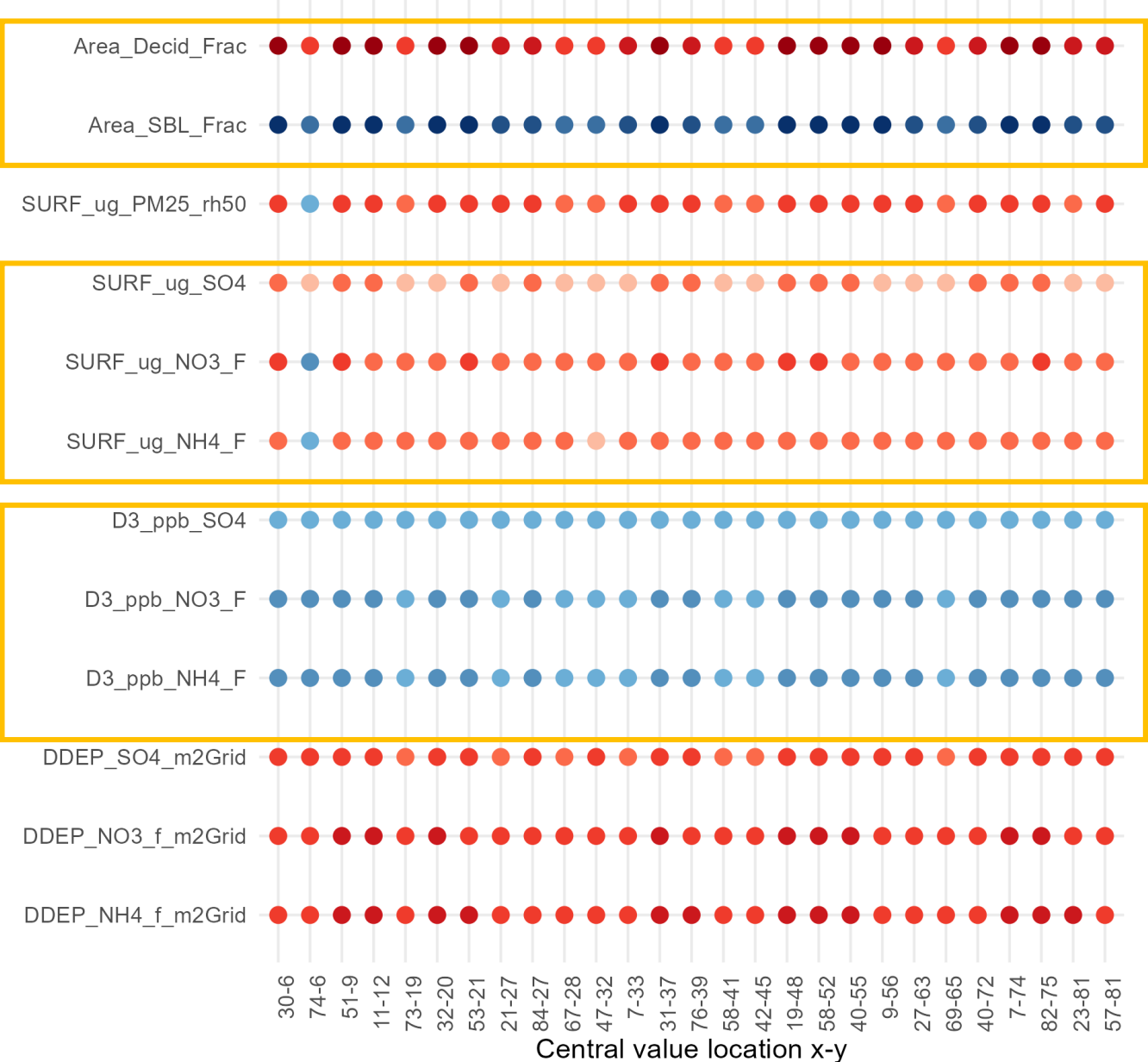


More trees

✓ Lower
surface
concentration

✓ Lower
concentration
in lowest level

Nov



week
absolute difference

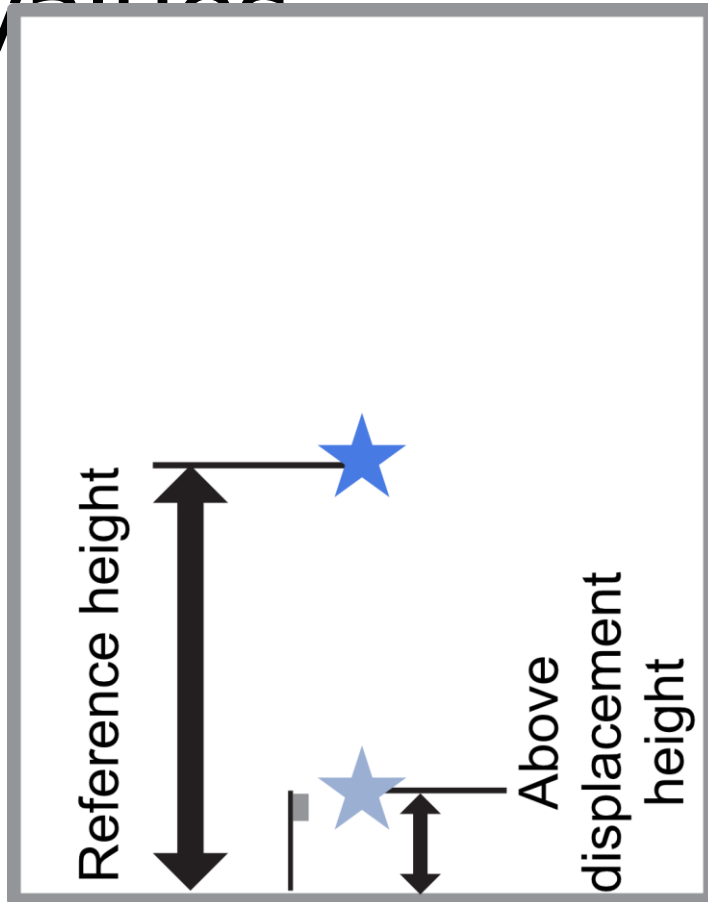
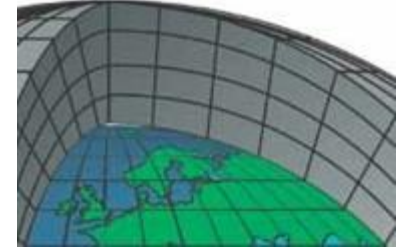
- < -0.66
- 0.66 to -0.33
- 0.33 to -0.03
- 0.03 to -0.003
- 0.003 to -0.00003
- 0.00003 to 0
- 0 to 0.00003
- 0.00003 to 0.003
- 0.003 to 0.03
- 0.03 to 0.33
- 0.33 to 0.66
- > 0.66

More trees

✗ higher surface concentration???

✓ Lower concentration in lowest level

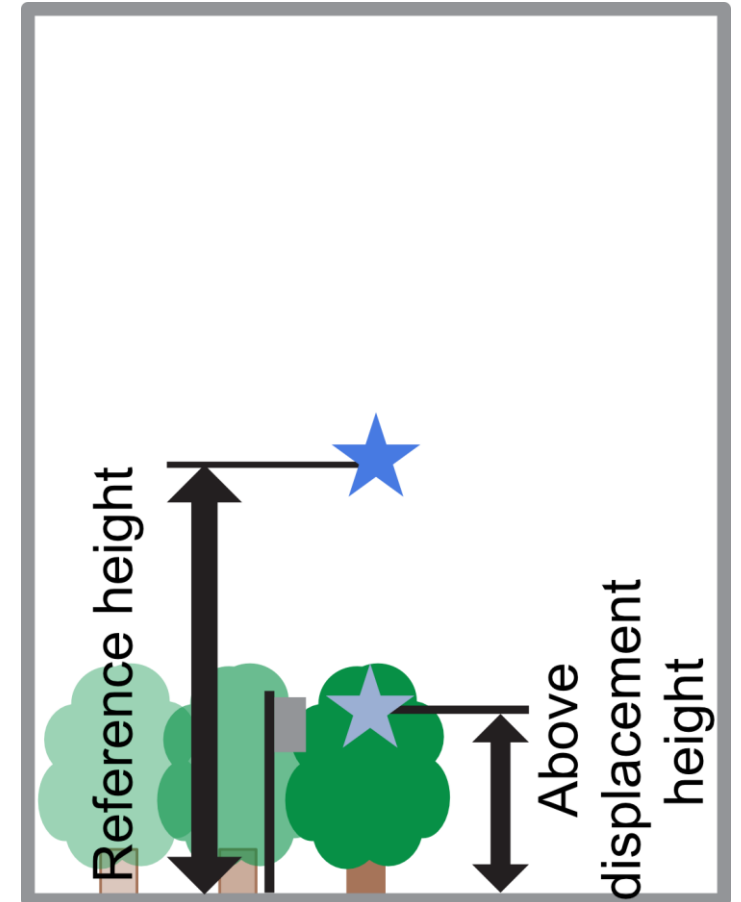
From 3D values to surface values



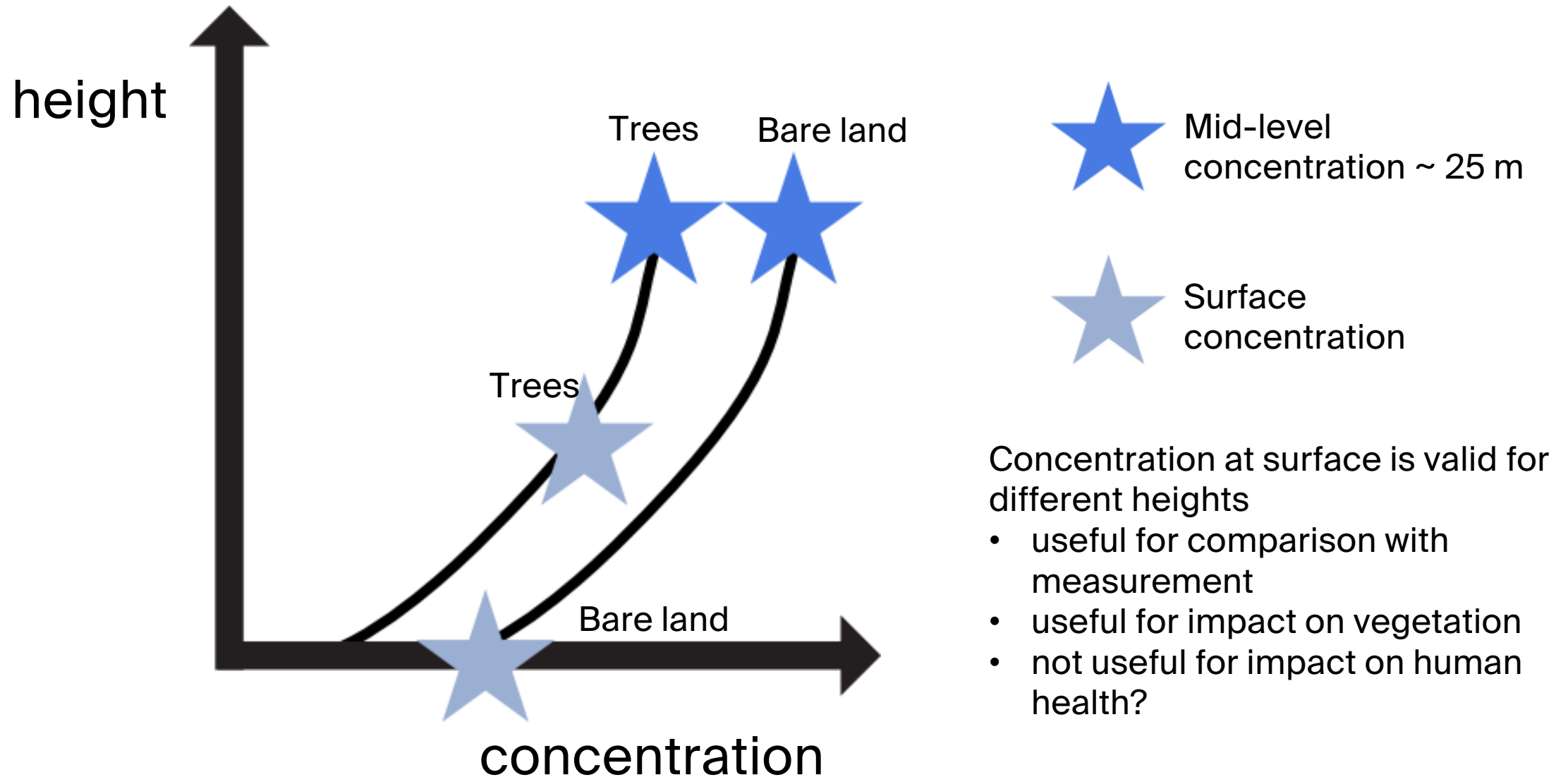
$$\chi^i(z) = \chi^i(z_{\text{ref}}) \frac{V_g^i(z_{\text{ref}})}{V_g^i(z)}$$

Extrapolated surface concentration =
3 m above displacement height d
 $d = 0.7 * h_{\text{veg}}$

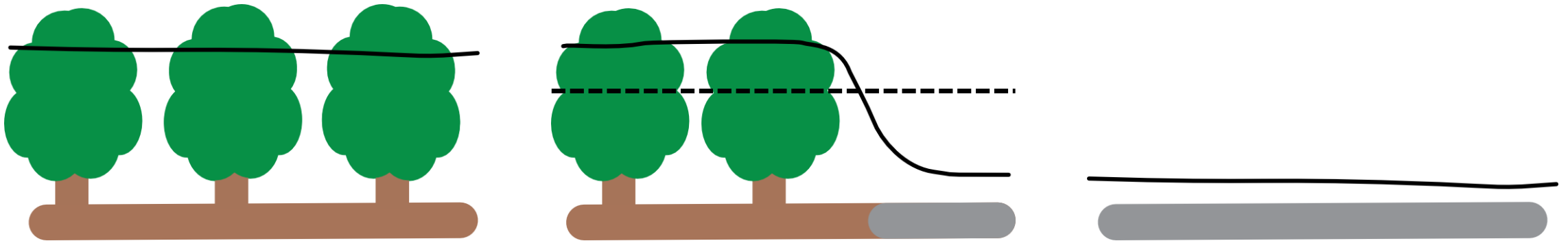
Vegetation height h_{veg}
Trees: 17 m
Sealed bare land: 0 m



Comparing results with different land covers

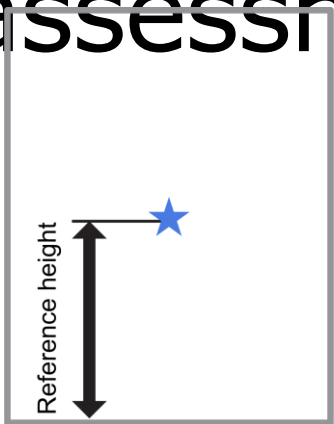


Grid cells with multiple land cover types



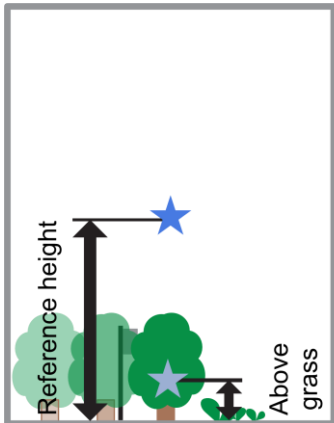
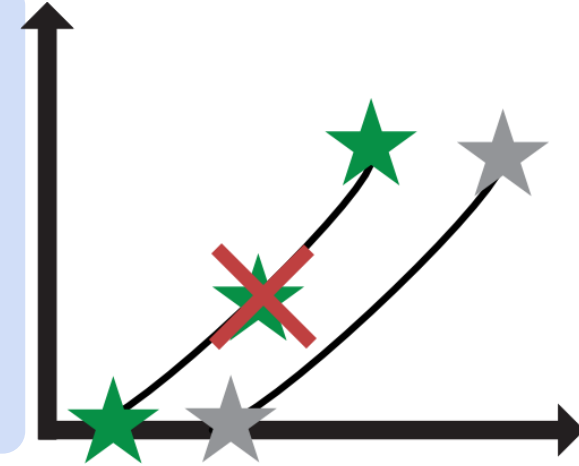
- The effect of extrapolation to surface concentration less pronounced with a mix of land cover classes in a grid cell
=> effect may be masked when large scale land covers are applied
- Our setup with extreme changes in land cover in single grid cells highlights the effect

What best to do human impact assessment?



Use middle of lowest grid cell – other models don't extrapolate to surface either

Extrapolate concentration over trees to surface using V_g over trees?



Extrapolate to the ground using single landcover type more relevant to where people live, e.g. grass?

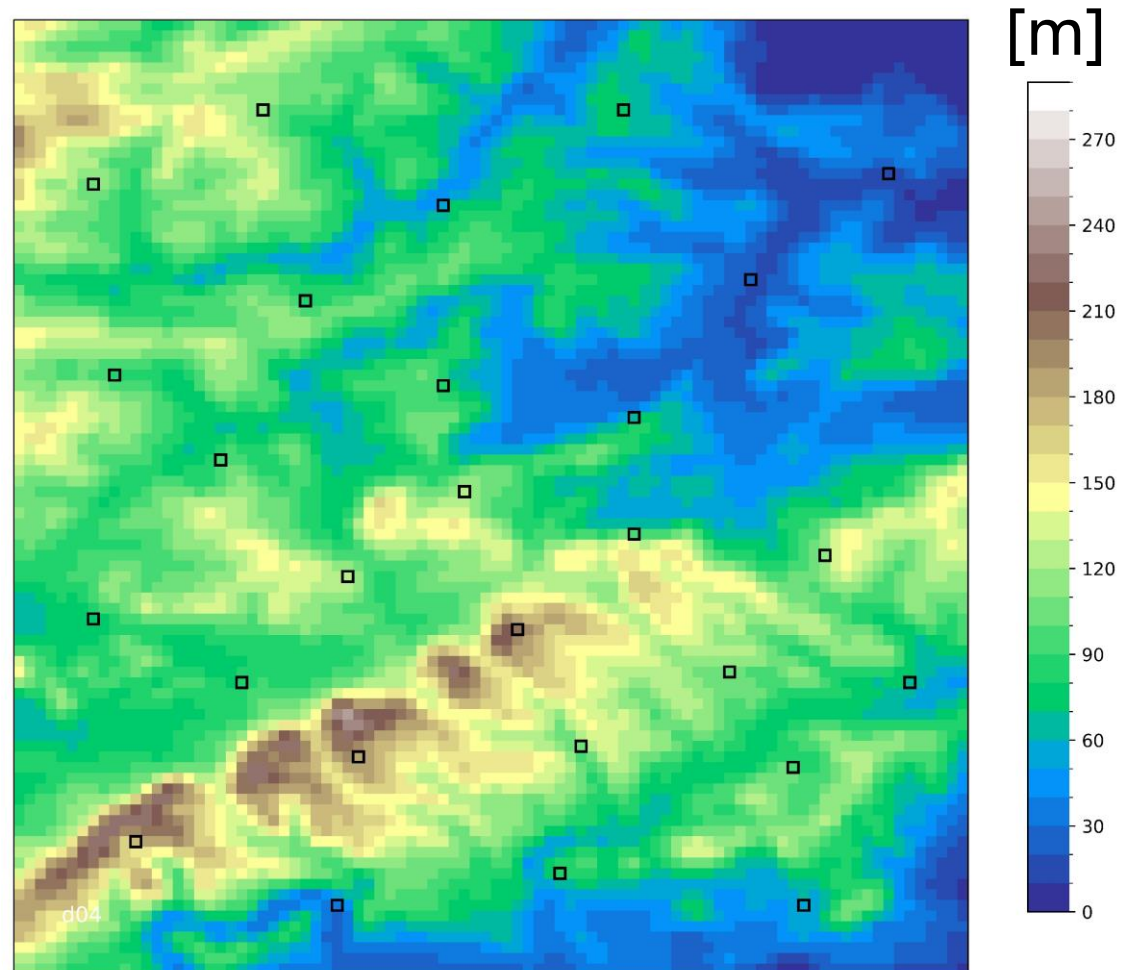
Any other idea?

Thank you!

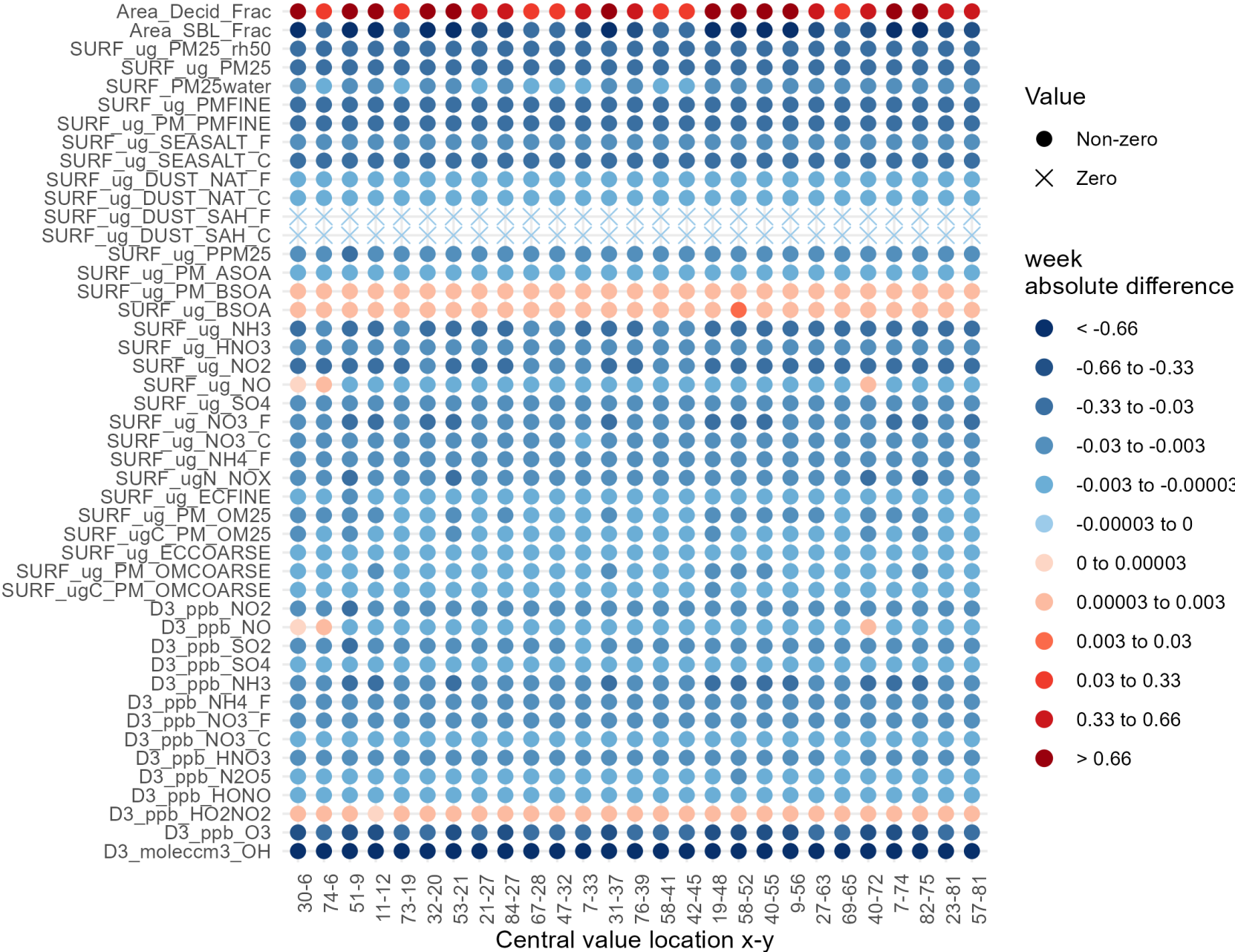
Any ideas? Please email me:

jansch@ceh.ac.uk

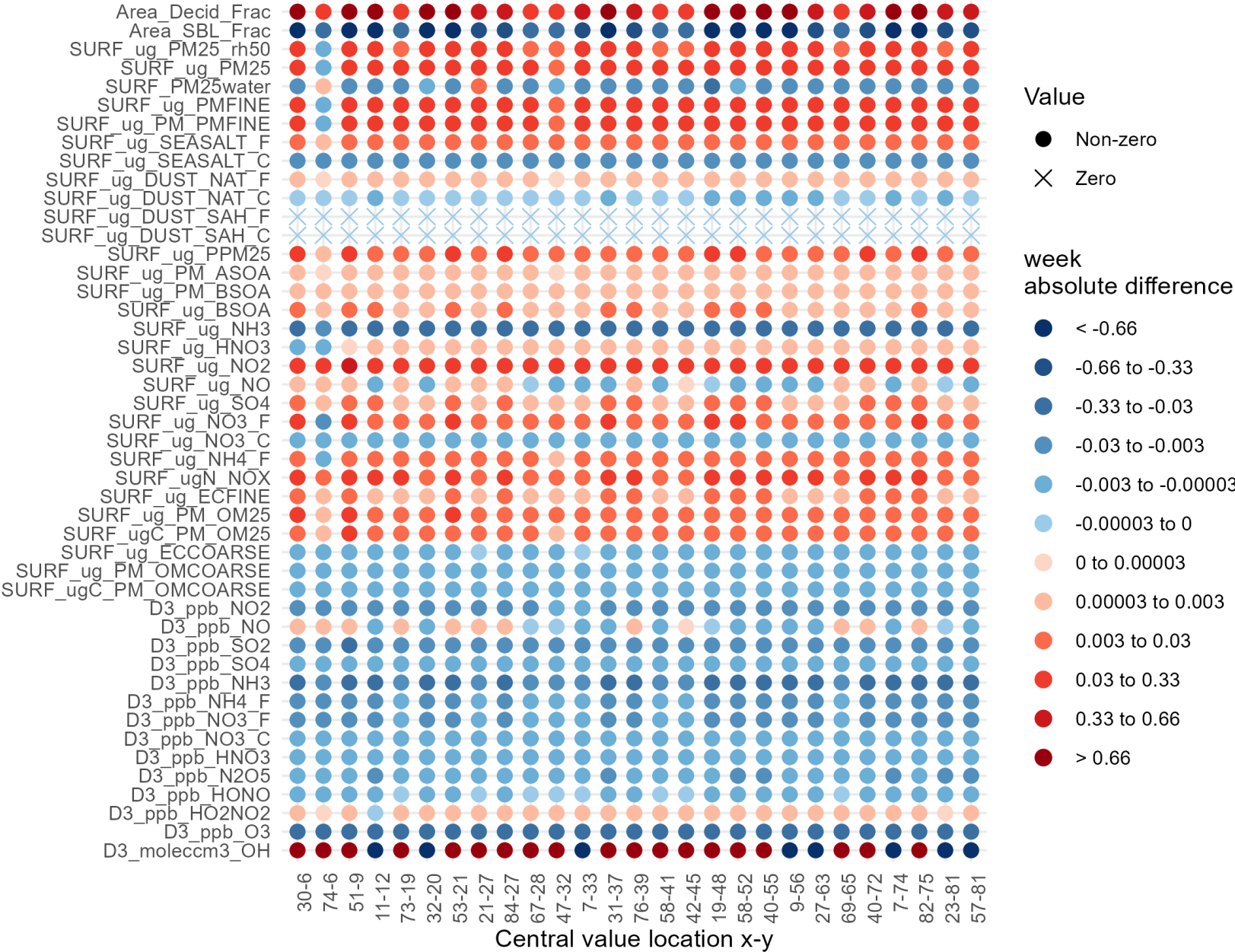
Elevation in innermost domain (BD)



May

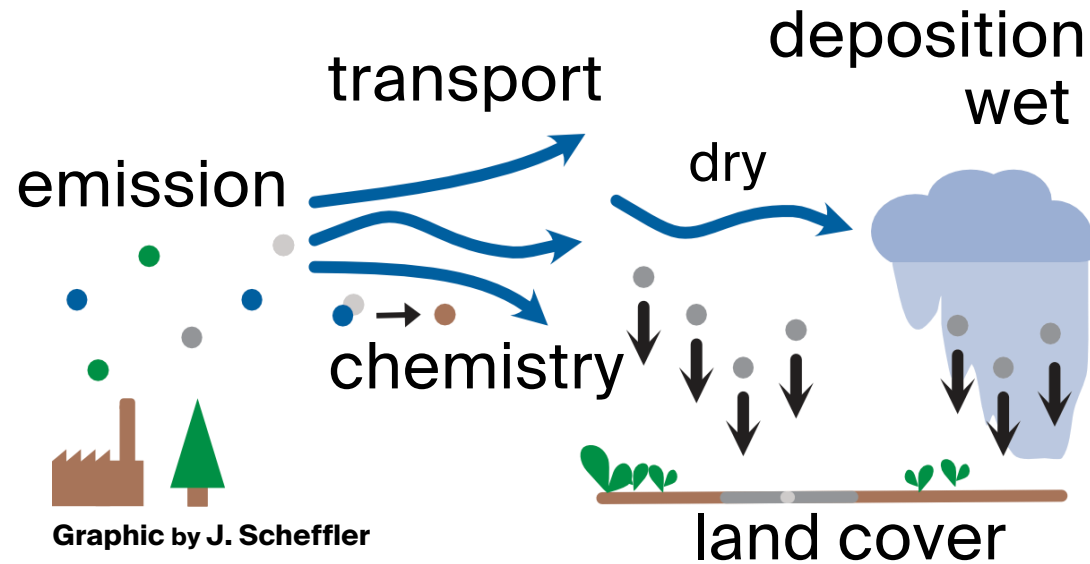


Nov

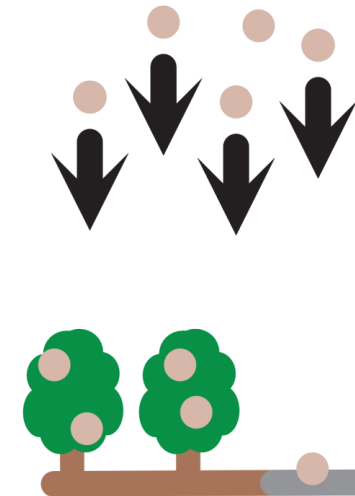


What impact does land cover have on air quality?

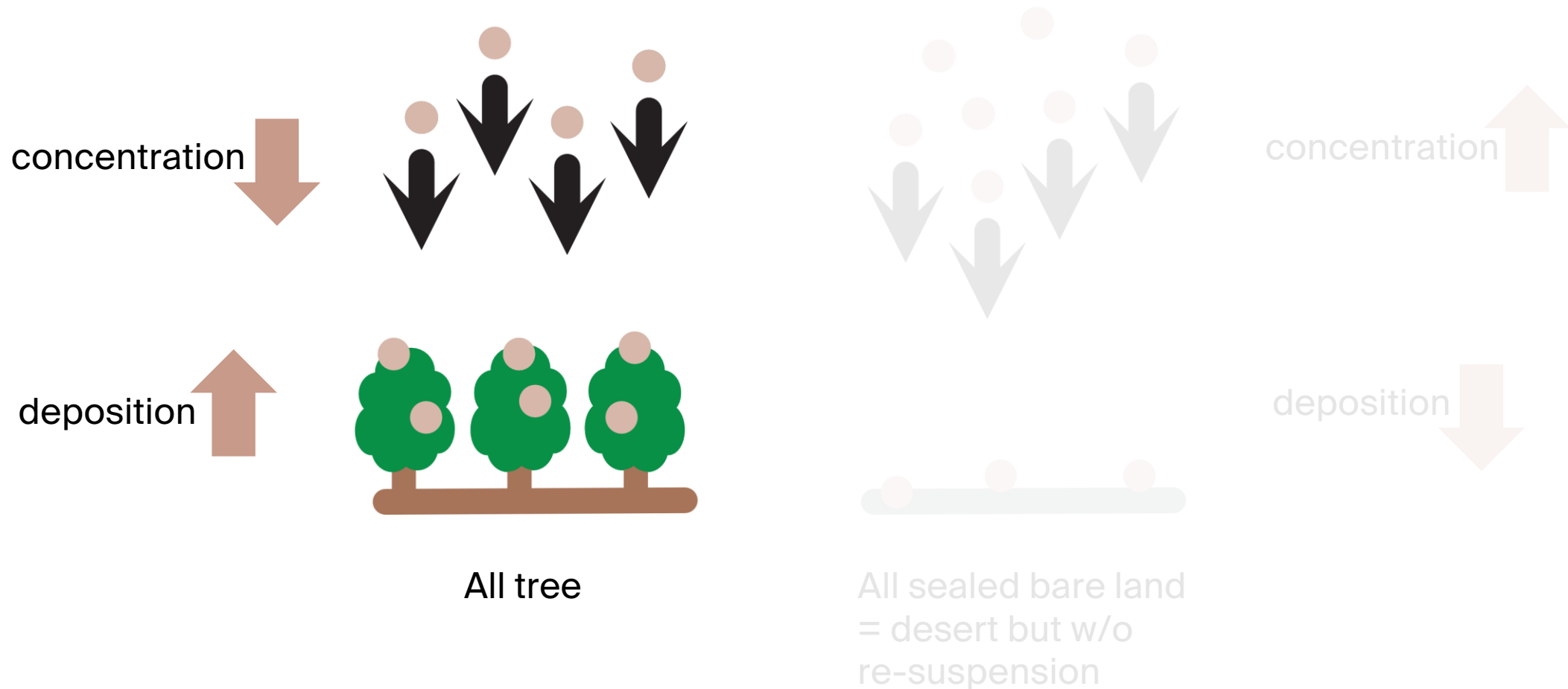
Atmospheric chemistry transport model



Depending on land cover more or less pollution can be removed from the atmosphere



Pollution removal by dry deposition



Dry deposition in EMEP

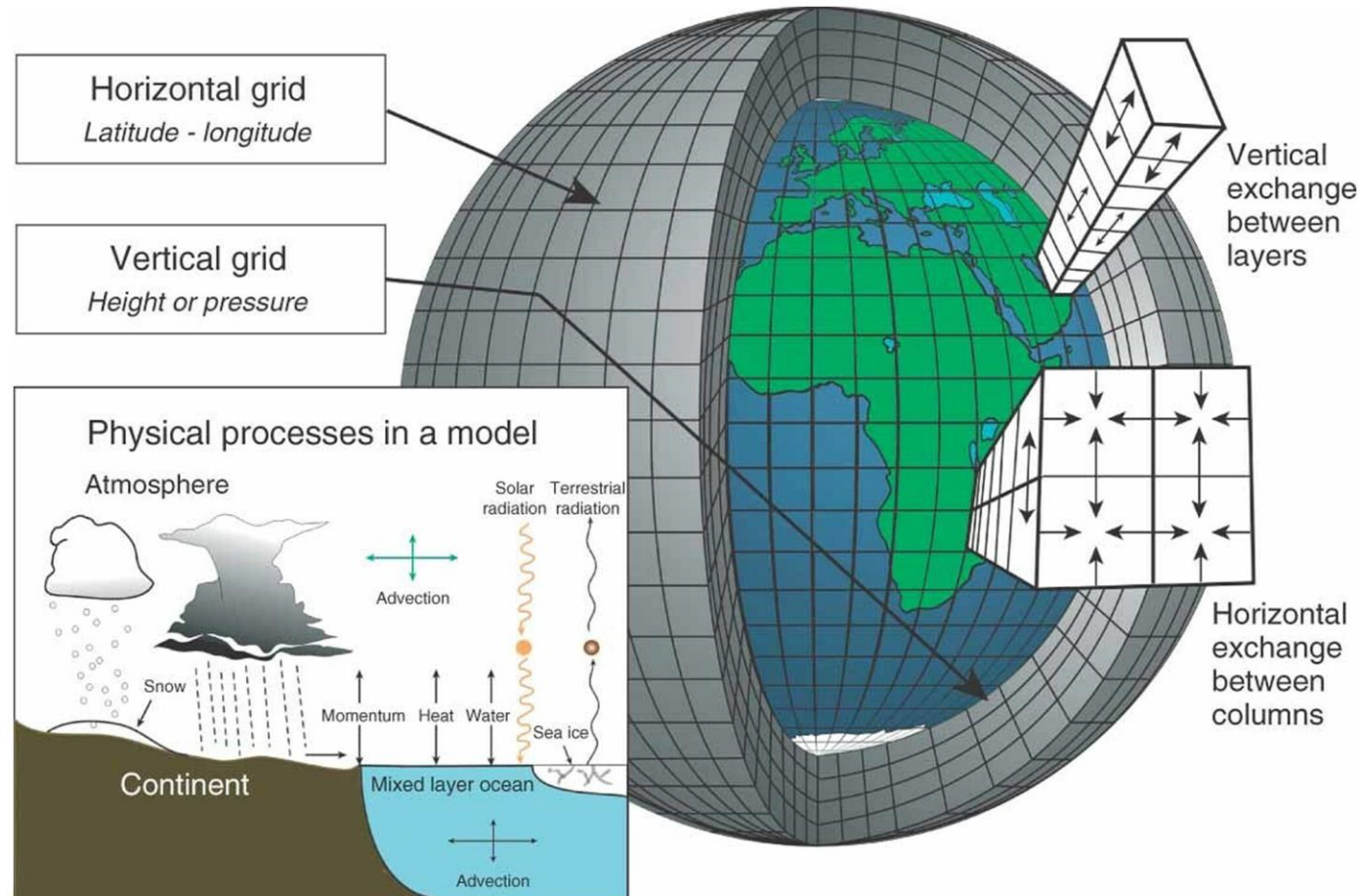
For particles, EMEP uses non-electrical-analogy formulation after Venkatram & Pleim (1999)

$$v_d = \frac{v_s}{(1 - e^{-rv_s})}.$$

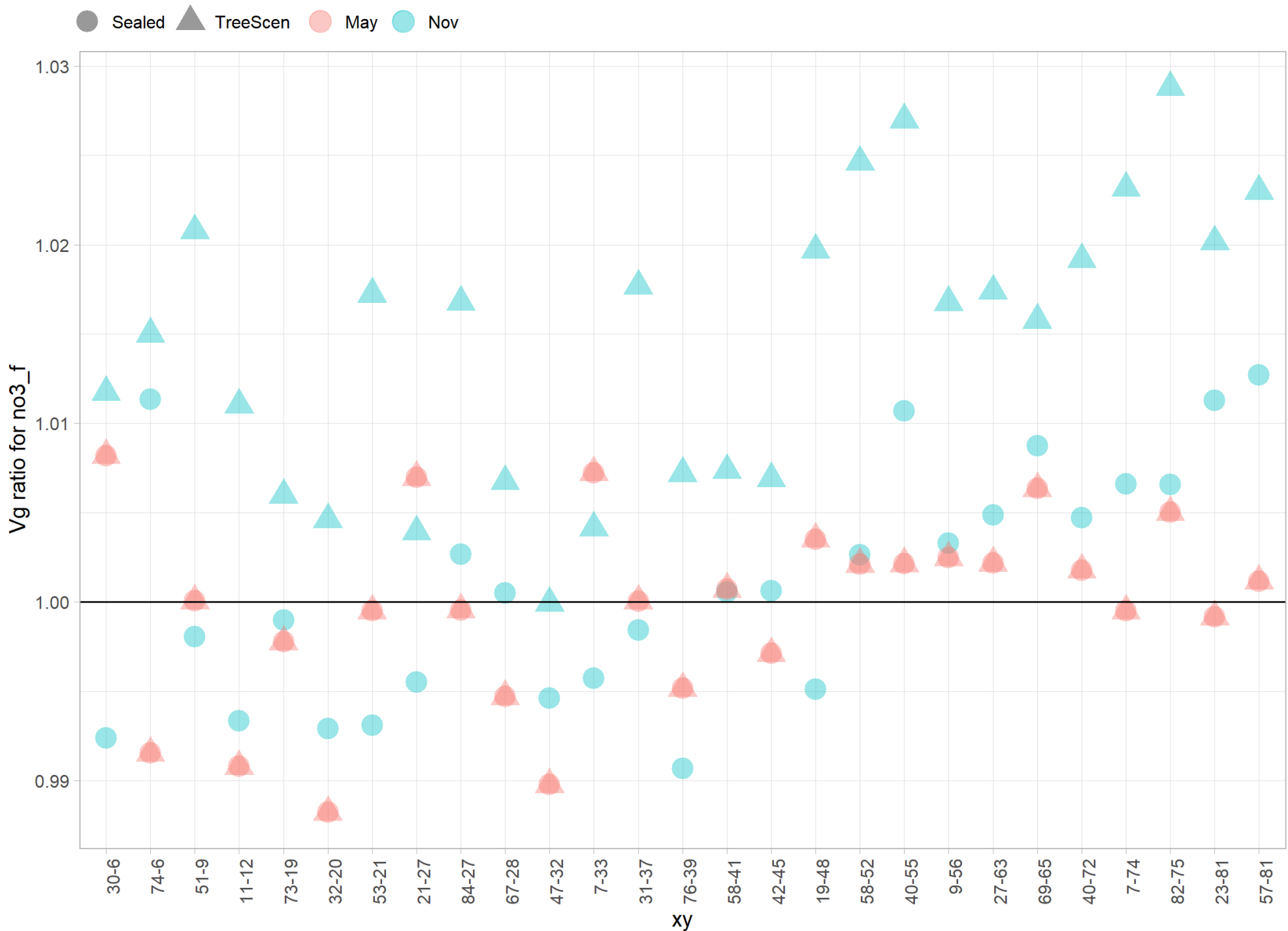
V_s – gravitational settling velocity

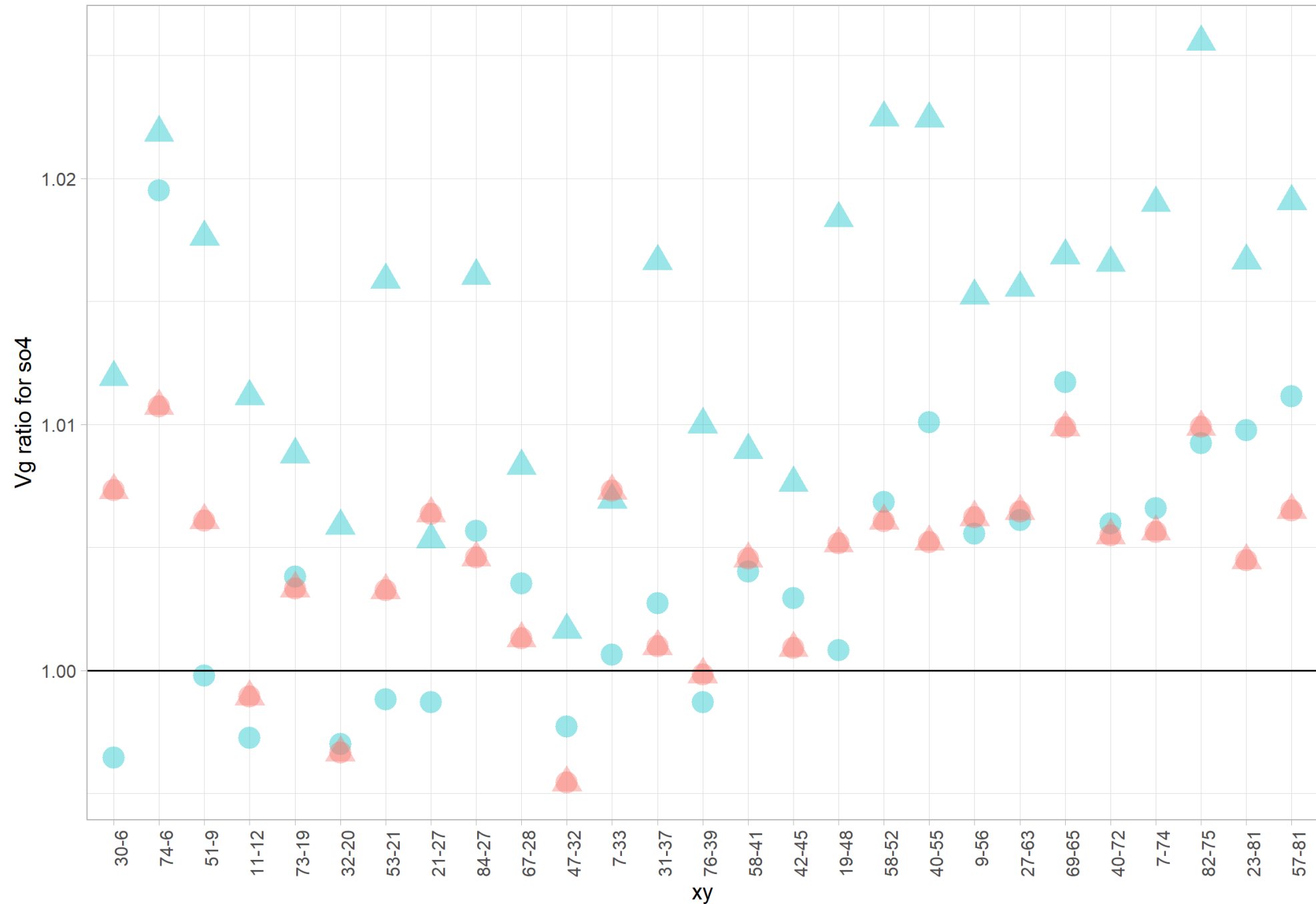
r – total resistance = $R_a + \frac{1}{V_{ds}}$

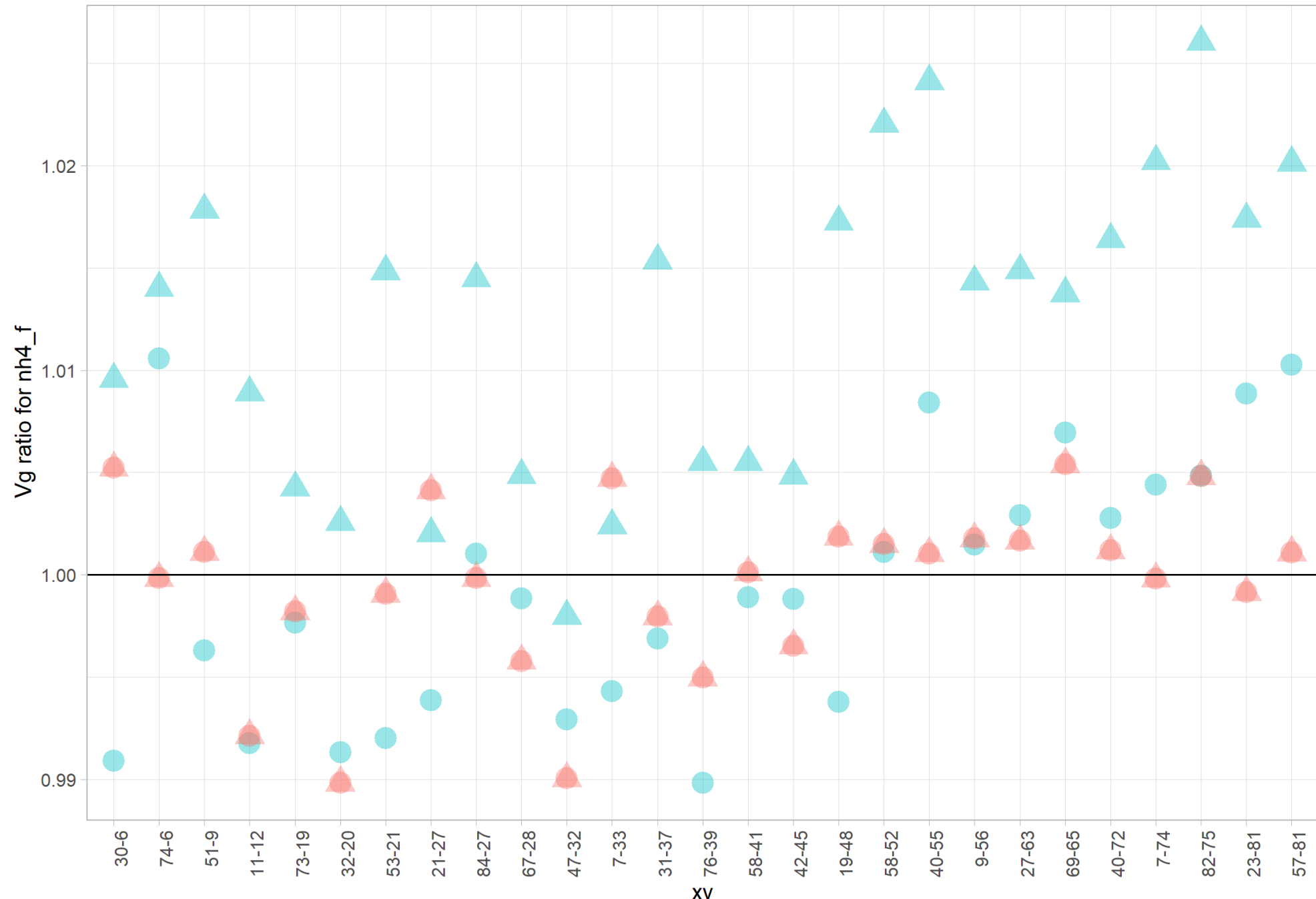
Atmospheric modelling on a 3D grid



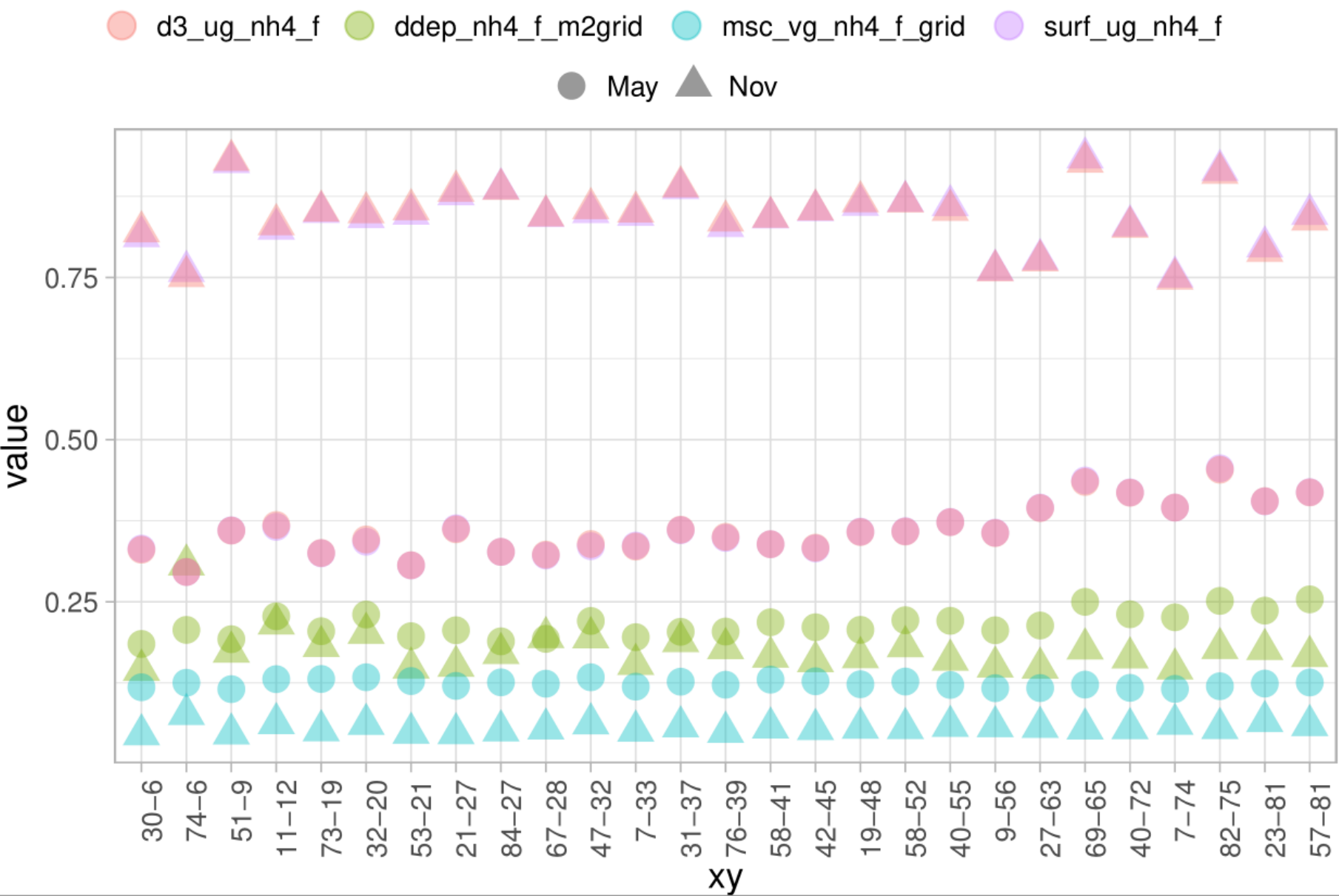
From Edwards (2010): Schematic representation of the Cartesian grid structure used in finite-difference GCMs. Graphic by Courtney Ritz and Trevor Burnham.



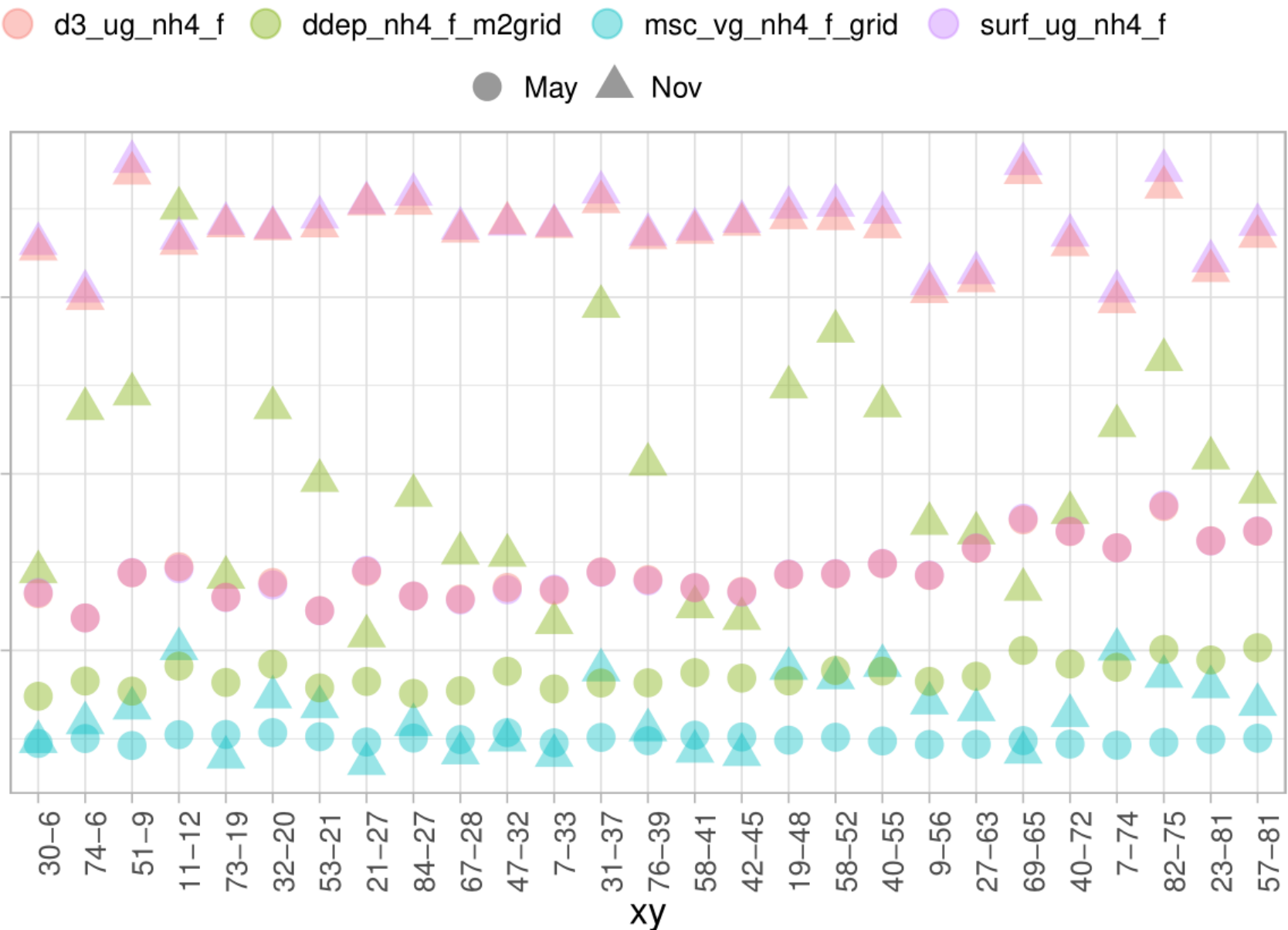




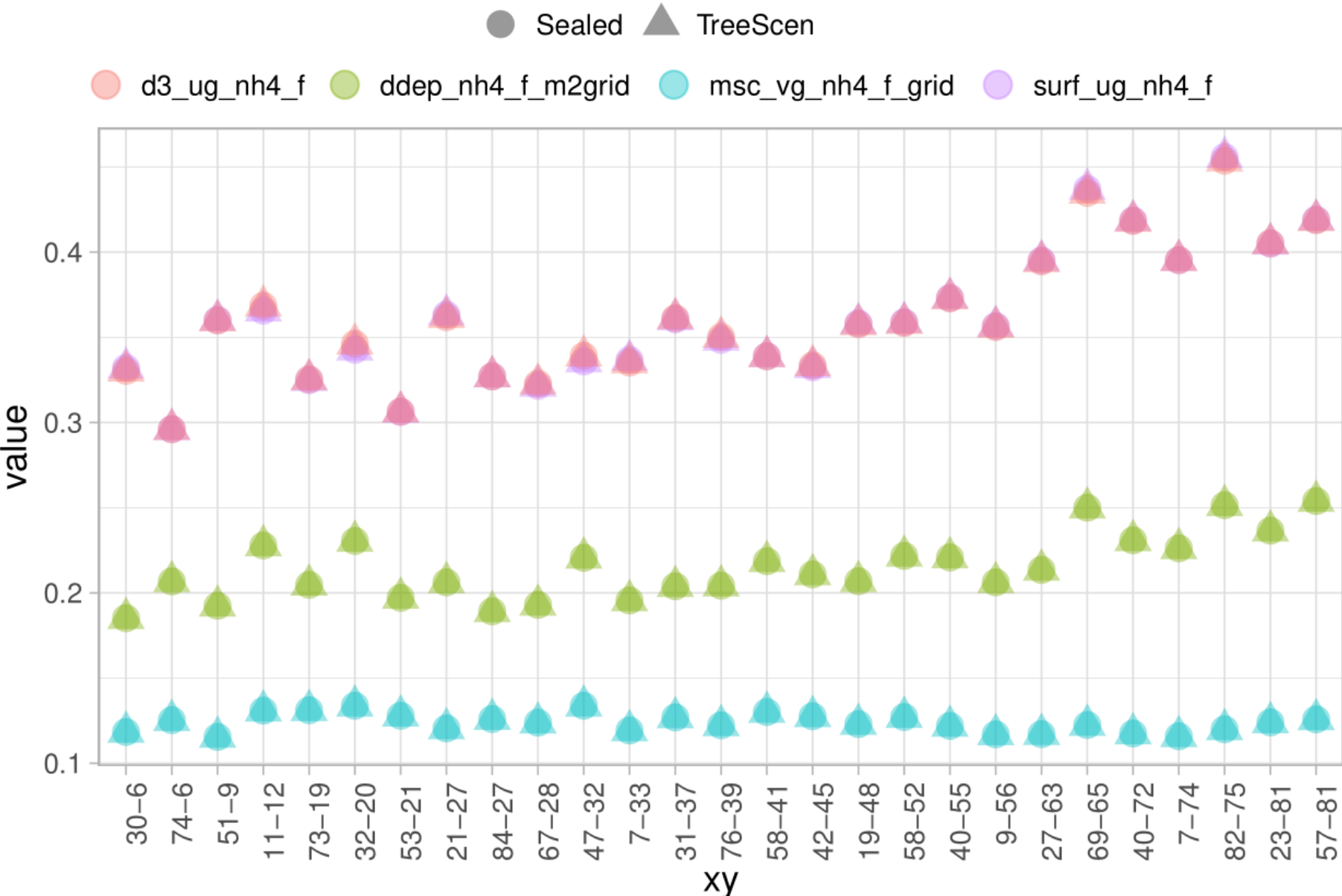
Sealed



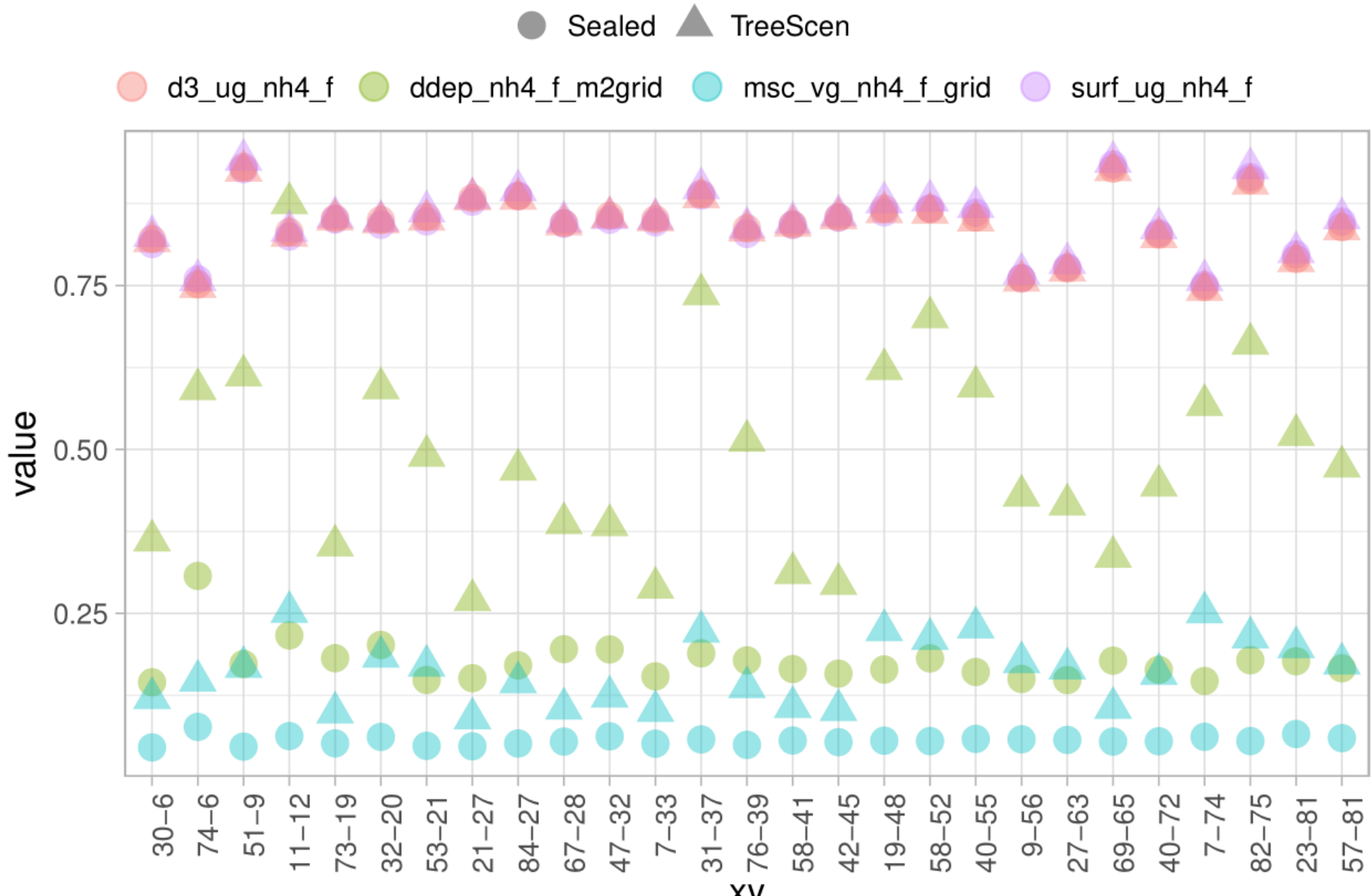
TreeScen

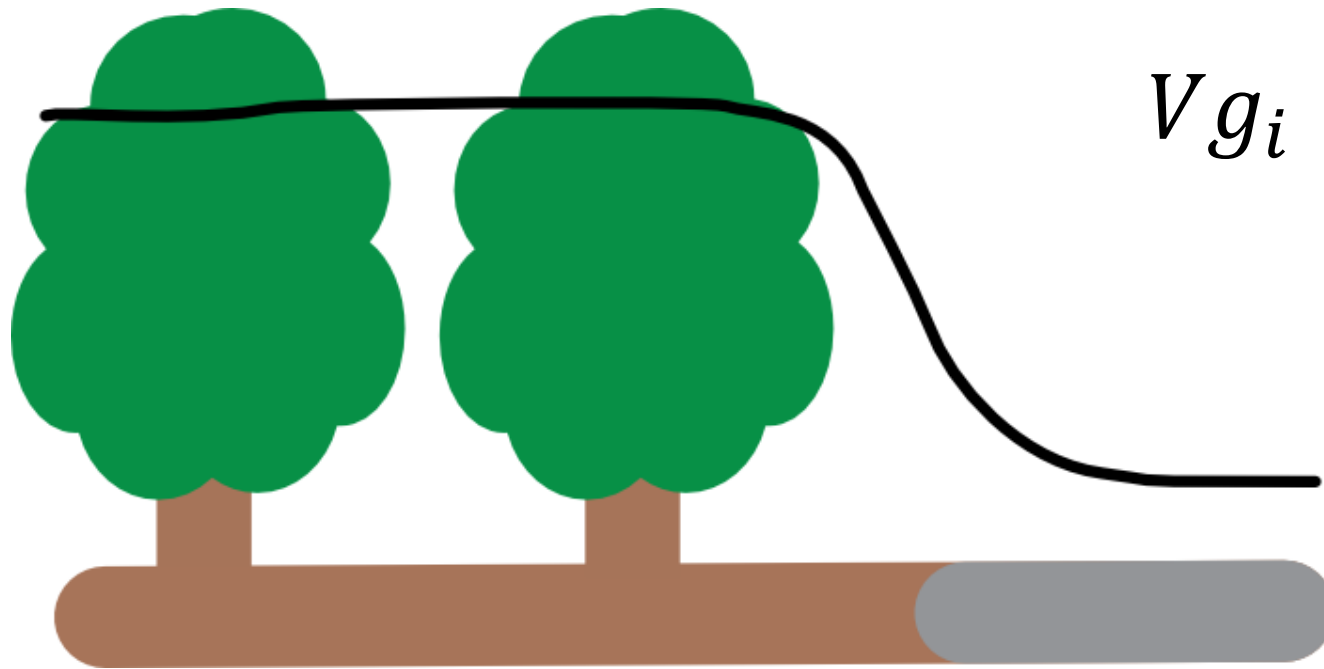


May



Nov





$$Vg_i = Vs_i / (1 - e^{-\left\{ \left(R_a + \frac{1}{Vds} \right) * Vs_i \right\}})$$

$Vds = f(LAI)$

If $LAI = 0$

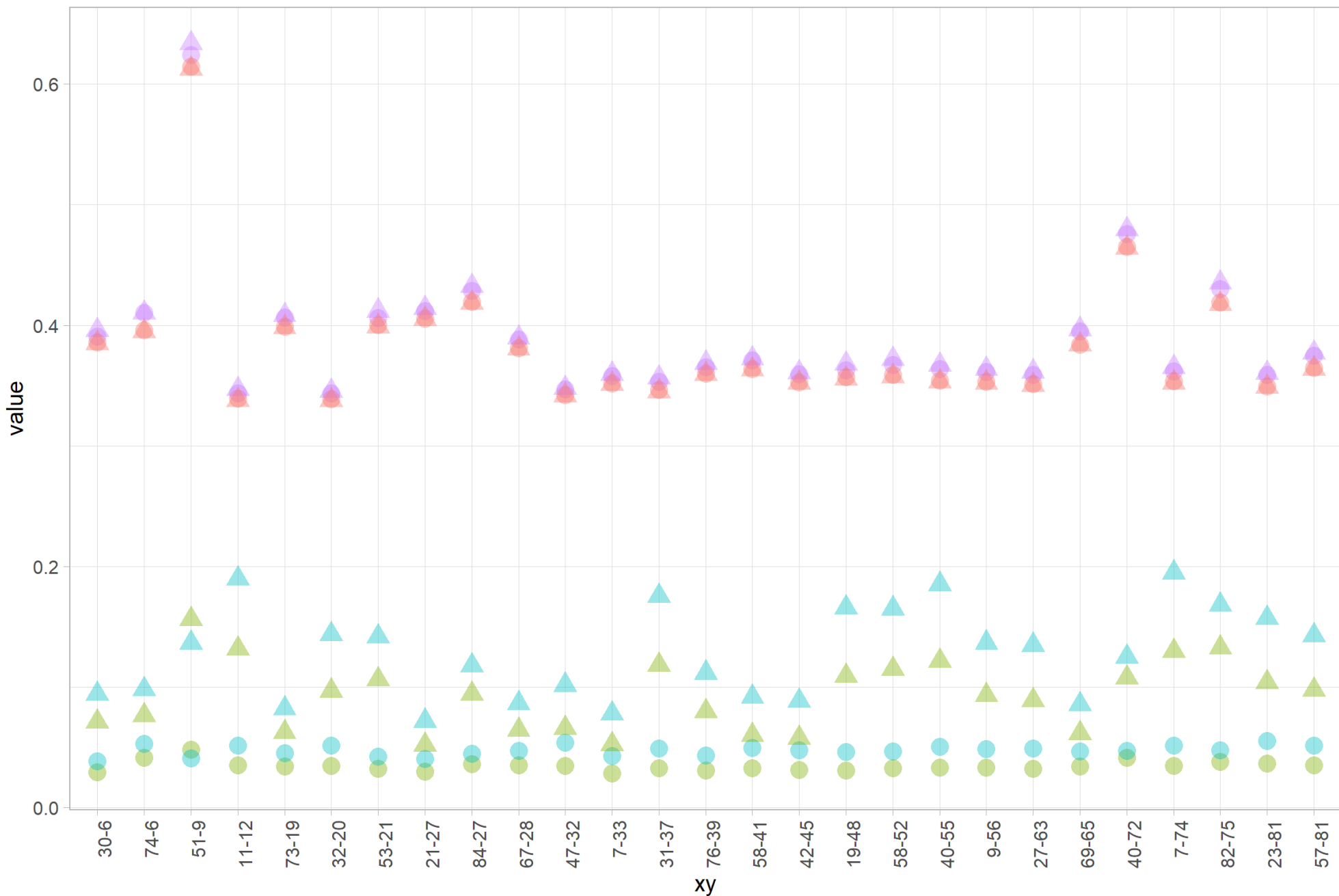
$Vds(\text{forest}) = Vds(\text{non-forest})$

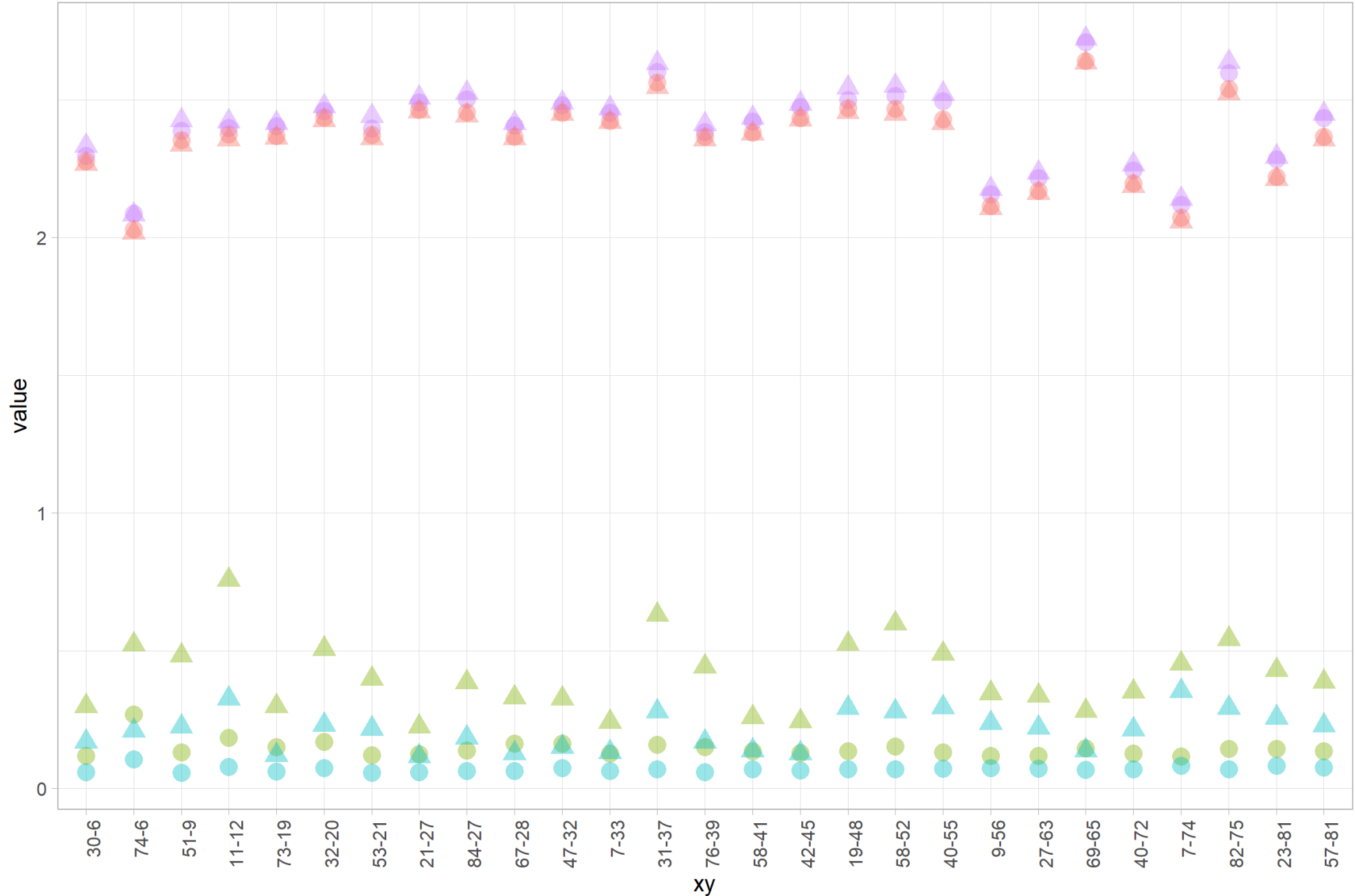
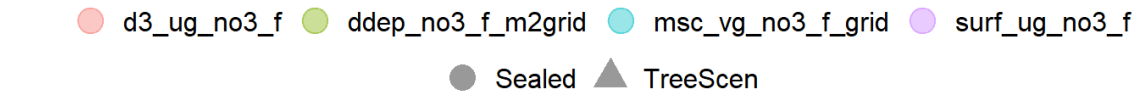
```
! Use non-electrical-analogy version of Venkatram+Pleim (AE,1999)
! ACP70
```

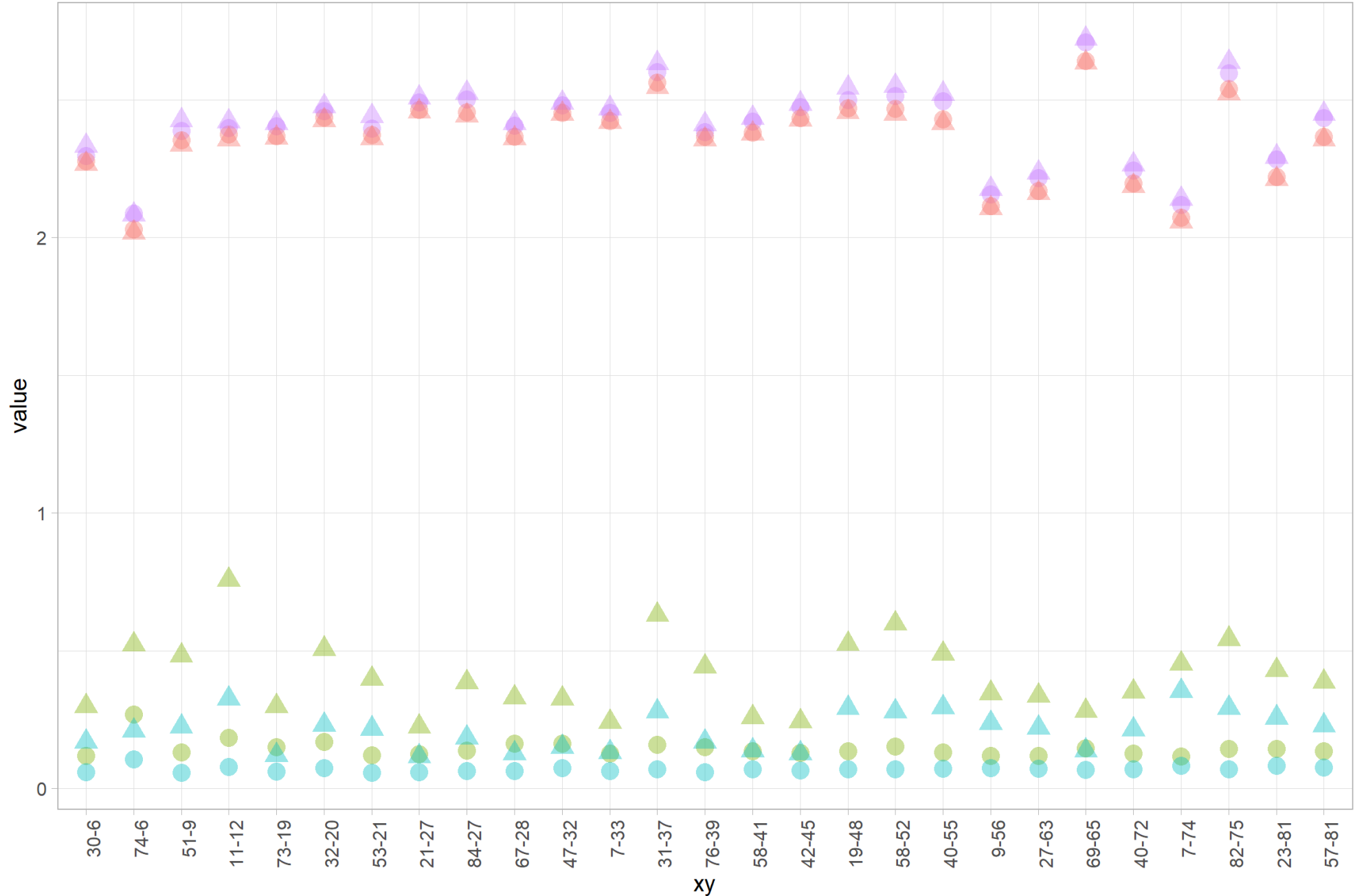
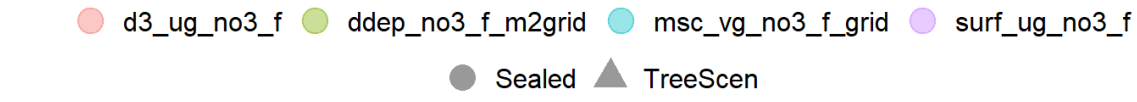
```
Vg_ref(icmp) = BL(icmp)%Vs/ &
( 1.0 - exp( -( L%Ra_ref + 1.0/Vds)* BL(icmp)%Vs))
Vg_3m(icmp) = BL(icmp)%Vs/ &
( 1.0 - exp( -( L%Ra_3m + 1.0/Vds)* BL(icmp)%Vs))
```

```
Vg_eff(icmp) = Vg_ref(icmp) !PW
```

d3_ug_so4 ddep_so4_m2grid msc_vg_so4_grid surf_ug_so4
Sealed TreeScen







The monetary value of air pollution removal by urban vegetation

Existing urban and peri-urban vegetation & possible changes to them



Atmospheric chemistry transport modelling → dry deposition of pollutants depends on surface (e.g. trees or bare soil)



Impact of $PM_{2.5}$ on mortality and morbidity on the population

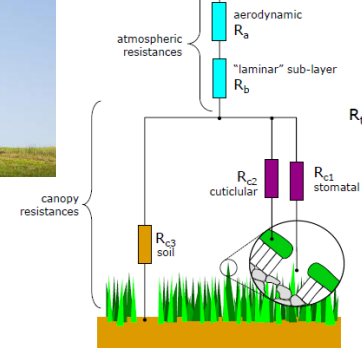
Health functions for 4 pollutants:

$PM_{2.5}$, SO_2 , NO_2 , O_3

Natural Capital



Provides a service:
Pollution removal



Provides a 'Good':
Clean air

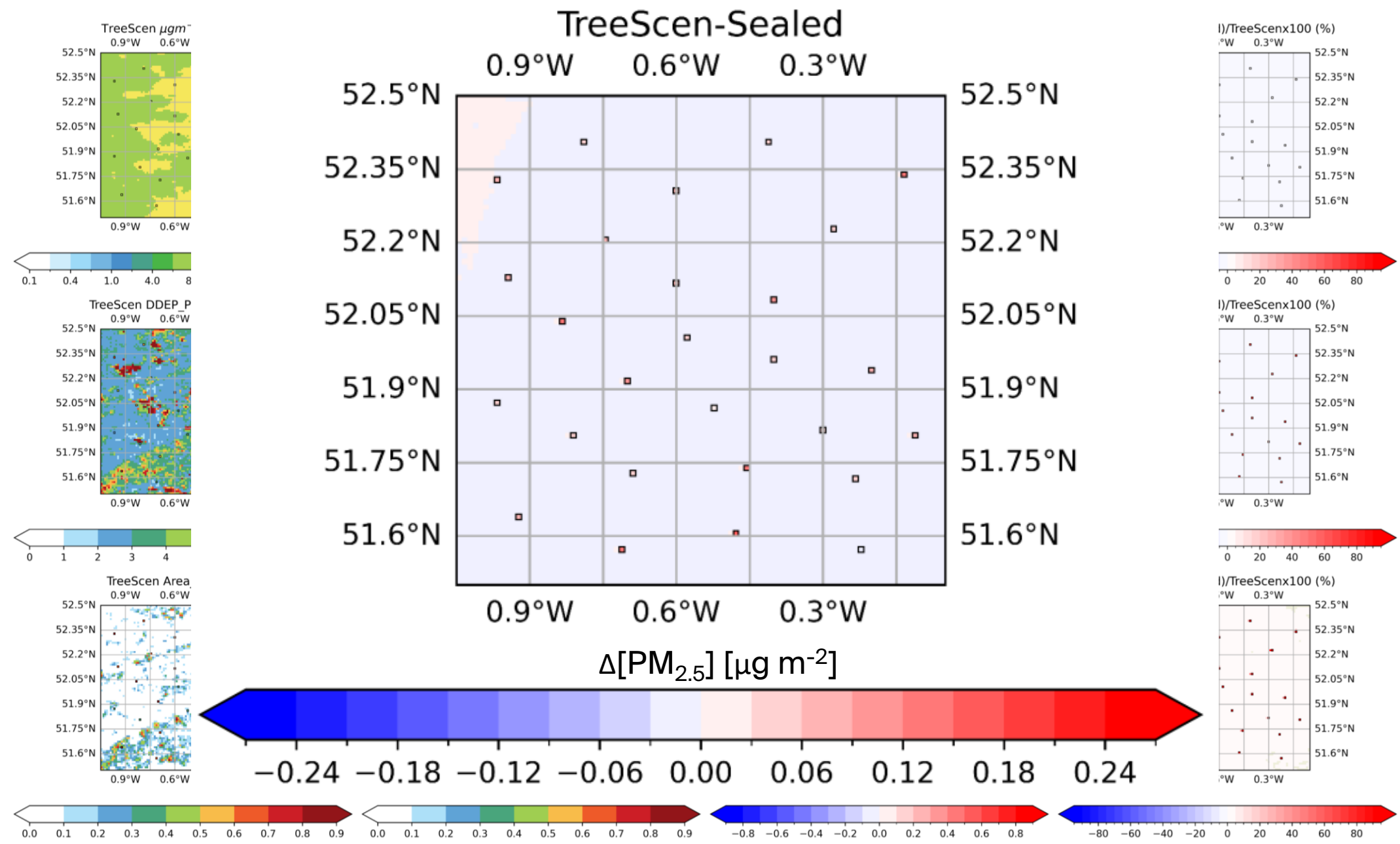


Our benefit:
**Improved health
Fewer hospital admissions**

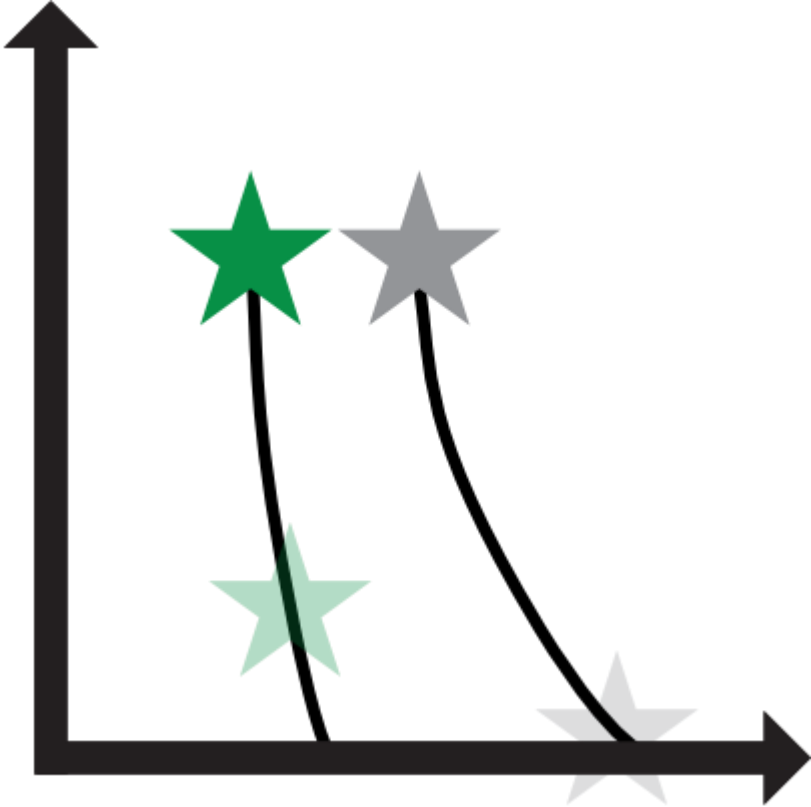


(Monetary value)

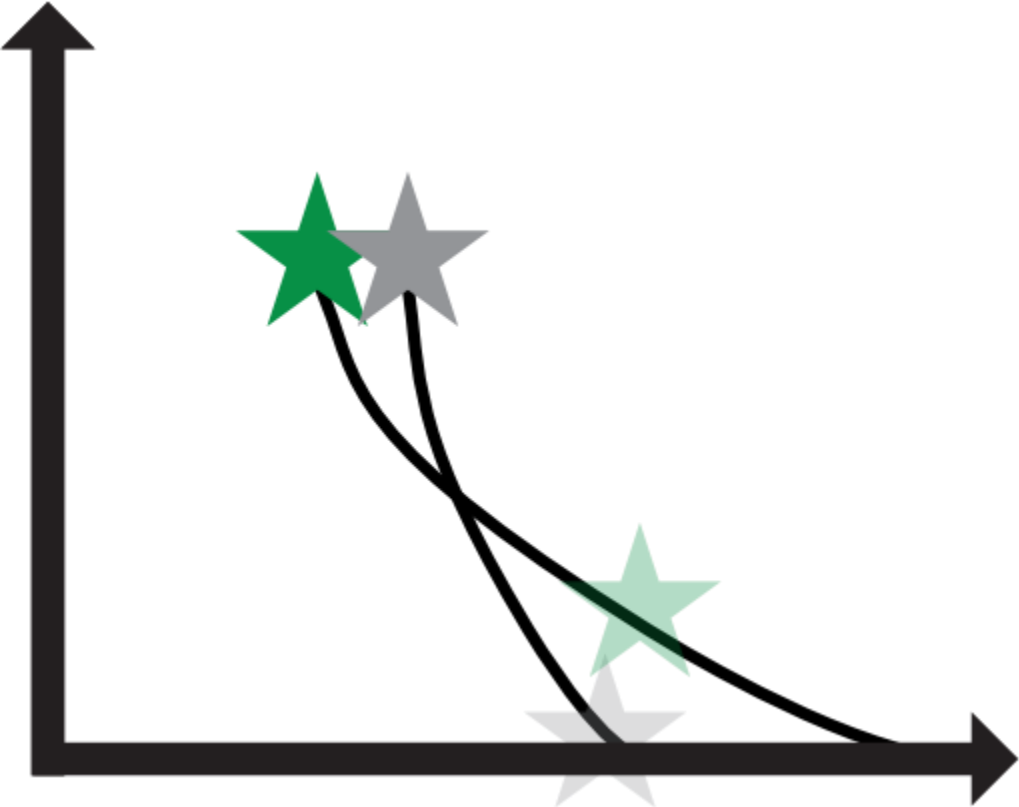




Leaf-on period



Leaf-off period



Tree cover

Sealed bare land

How do we best assess the impact of land cover change on air quality?

- Use lowest grid concentration instead of surface grid concentration?
- Extrapolate all land covers to 3 m above ground even for higher elevated land covers?
- Extrapolate concentration to the ground based on one single landcover type that is more relevant to where people live, e.g. grass?
- Any other ideas?