
Lourdes Luna Ramos (1), Antonio Delgado Huertas (2), Isabel Miralles Mellado (1,3), and Albert Solé Benet (1)
(1) EEZA-CSIC, DESERTIFICATION, ALMERÍA, Spain (lourdes@eeza.csic.es), (2) Laboratorio de Biogeoquímica de Isótopos Estables, Instituto Andaluz de Ciencias de la Tierra IACT (CSIC-UGR), Camino del Jueves s/n, 18100 Armilla, Granada, Spain, (3) Georges Lemaître Earth Sciences Center, Université Catholique de Louvain, Place Louis Pasteur 3, Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium

Water deficit and low infiltration reduce restoration success in semiarid post-mine soils, where high mortality of plants has been observed in early years of the restoration. Species that originate from arid and semi-arid regions are often considered appropriate for xeriscaping, but there have been relatively few direct measurements of main water related parameters as water use efficiency (WUE) in restoration strategies. In this respect, the goal of this study was to analyse the efficiency with which native plants use water when organic amendments and mulches are applied in mine soil restorations. The experimental design was established in a calcareous quarry in Almería (SE Spain), under arid climate. We tested two organic amendments (sewage sludge from water treatment plant and compost from vegetable residues) and gravel mulch. Three plant species were planted in 50 m² experimental plots: Macrochloa tenacissima, Genista umbellata and Anthyllis cytisoides. Soil moisture was monitored at a depth of 0.1 m during 4 years and at the end of this period stable isotope of Carbon (δ¹³C), considered as an effective method to evaluate the plant intrinsic WUE, was measured. We did not observe significant differences in soil moisture among the different soil restoration treatments. With regard to WUE, species is the factor most important to establish differences. Anthyllis cytisoides showed the lowest mean δ¹³C values, indicating low WUE. On the contrary, Macrochloa tenacissima presented high δ¹³C values. Moreover, species showed higher δ¹³C values when gravel mulch was applied. To increase WUE in restored soils under arid conditions it is necessary to apply water conservation methods and to use the most appropriate species.