



From Plant Traits to Vegetation Structure: Chance and Selection in the Assembly of Ecological Communities

Bill Shipley

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Plant community ecology has traditionally taken a taxonomical approach based on population dynamics. This book contrasts such an approach with a trait-based approach. After reviewing these two approaches, it then explains how models based on the Maximum Entropy Formalism can be used to predict the relative abundance of different species from a potential species pool. Following this it shows how the trait constraints, upon which the model is based, are necessary consequences of natural selection and population dynamics. The final sections of the book extend the discussion to macroecological patterns of species abundance and concludes with some outstanding unresolved questions. Written for advanced undergraduates, graduates and researchers in plant ecology, Bill Shipley demonstrates how a trait-based approach, can explain how the principle of natural selection and quantitative genetics can be combined with maximum entropy methods to explain and predict the structure of plant communities.

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