

Special Issue

Mediterranean Shrub Ecosystems Under Climate Change

Message from the Guest Editors

The Mediterranean ecosystems are well adapted to a climatic regime generally characterized by hot and dry summers and cool and rainy winters. In the Mediterranean, we currently encounter climatic issues such as a drop in precipitation and an increase in temperature, which are predicted to become more severe by the end of this century and to exceed the environmental conditions inherent to the Holocene. The Mediterranean region is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots and displays a wide variety of shrubland ecosystems. This biodiversity richness and the complex biogeographical and functional characterization issues make conservation a great challenge. Typical hazards are the impact of fire and its frequency on Mediterranean ecosystems and the unknown ways in which climate change will act on biotic interactions. Quite a number of studies have experimentally simulated the impact of mostly abiotic stresses on the biotic components of shrub ecosystems. Biodiversity emerges as a driver to mitigate changes. Nevertheless, our knowledge of how these Mediterranean shrub ecocomplexes will face climate change remains limited.

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