

Special Issue

The Silent Players of Forest Ecosystems: Viruses, Viroids, and Beyond

Message from the Guest Editor

Recent studies have revealed an unexpectedly high diversity of viruses in soilborne pathogens, with implications for pathogen reproduction and spread. Similarly, mycoviruses in ectomycorrhizal and saprotrophic fungi may influence fungal fitness, ecological interactions, and responses to environmental stressors. Viroids and other non-viral RNA agents, though less studied, have also been detected in plants and fungi, raising questions about their ecological functions and potential impacts on tree health, fungal symbioses, and disease dynamics. However, the ecological consequences of virus–fungus–host interactions remain largely unexplored, especially across climatic gradients. For this Special Issue, we welcome research on the forest virome at multiple scales—from the molecular mechanisms behind virus– and viroid–host interactions to landscape-level patterns in RNA agent diversity. We encourage studies that combine high-throughput sequencing, experimental virology, and ecological modelling to better understand how these RNA- and DNA-based elements modulate forest health and productivity.

Guest Editor

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Deadline for manuscript submissions

31 December 2025



Viruses

an Open Access Journal
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Impact Factor 3.5
CiteScore 7.7
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