



Ecological Causes of Age-Related Decline in Forest Productivity

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Message from the Guest Editor

The age-related dynamics of growth and yield have long been known to foresters and provided a robust foundation for forest management and planning. The focus of our studies has expanded over the years, moving from the tree and stand level to leaf ecophysiological processes, on the one hand, and net ecosystem productivity on the other. While this has provided additional insight, it has also added one layer of complexity, as different mechanisms could dominate at different scales and fade as a result of emerging system properties; the very existence of an age-related decline in productivity has been questioned, in particular in complex, more natural forests. Yet an understanding of the underlying ecological processes is more crucial than ever, if we are to explain and predict the observed modifications in age-related productivity in response to global change. We therefore encourage studies from all fields, including experimental studies, monitoring approaches, meta-analyses, and models, to contribute to this Special Issue, in order to better understand the role played by forest age in the local and global C cycle, as a basis for sustainable forest management into the future.





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