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Mixed Species Forests: Risks, Resilience and Management

Guest Editor:

Prof. Dr. Pasquale A. Marziliano
Department of Agricultural Science, Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria, Via dell'Università, 25, 89124 Reggio Calabria, RC, Italy

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Message from the Guest Editor

An increase in the frequency and severity of drought events, and disturbances in general, as predicted for the coming decades, may have dramatic implications for the resilience of forest ecosystems. In the face of climate change, fostering mixed-species forests, with species adapted to various climatic conditions, is considered one of the most important measures to use in the climate-adopted forest management of many forests in Europe. These forests show complementary resource use, with positive consequences for productivity, higher carbon storage capacity, ecosystem health and vitality, resistance and resilience, and their spread is an important option to adapt European mountain forests and forestry to future disturbances and extreme events. Information on how resistance and resilience can be affected in relation to tree species composition is, therefore, essential for decision making in adaptive forestry. Nevertheless, though mixed-species forestry is gaining popularity in Europe, and a greater understanding of mixed-species forest dynamics for modeling risk assessment and forest functions aimed at fostering alternative silvicultural practices in harsh environments is needed.

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Contact Us

Forests Editorial Office
MDPI, Grosspeteranlage 5
4052 Basel, Switzerland

Tel: +41 61 683 77 34
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