



Insect Ecology

Peter W. Price

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Insect Ecology is the world's foremost reference to the never-ending and crucial interactions of the richest taxon of organisms on this earth, with perhaps some 8 million extant species. Now in its Third Edition and twentieth year of publication, Insect Ecology has endured as an unparalleled classic.

Taking the reader from an explanation of the science to its significance as a discipline, Insect Ecology is a meticulous, systematic examination of the underlying dynamics of plant-insect interactions, predation, parasites and hosts, and mutualistic relationships, including pollination ecology, that are central to understanding the insects' role in nature. Viewing the largely invisible drama of natural protagonists and antagonists, hidden in the lush foliage of a tropical rain forest or temperate woody vegetation, Peter Price details the unique traits, behaviors, and functions of insects, while placing them in the broader contexts of their places in food webs, ecosystem function, population dynamics, and community interactions.

The author also describes the various levels of insect interaction, from trophic relationships (Part II), populations (Part III), and communities (Part IV), while unfolding the infinite variety of insect species and their visible legacy in the fossil record. Full of fascinating details ("Ants are everywhere, but only occasionally noticed. They run much of the terrestrial world as the premier soil turners." "[Insect] galls provide tanning acids and the basis for inks."), Insect Ecology offers detail and breadth, while providing timely discussion on the conservation of biodiversity, the existence and study of vacant ecological niches, latitudinal gradients in species richness, and evolutionary perspectives on population dynamics. The book also examines the development of theory in insect ecology and how it is advanced.

Novel features in the Third Edition include four new chapters, covering the importance of insect ecology, the development of theory in the science, hypotheses on plant and herbivore interactions, and a synthesis chapter on population dynamics. Subheadings within chapters provide easier subject access, and many new figures contribute to the book's aesthetic appeal.

Clearly organized and with a bibliography of 2,000 references to up-to-date and classic literature, the Third Edition of Insect Ecology is a practical, well-formatted resource. Also copiously illustrated with over 350 figures, many new to this edition, Insect Ecology is a lush graphic tour of the minute, often startling universe of insects in their native habitat. With a history in geologic time much older than the terrestrial vertebrates, insects speak to us—the scarab beetle encased in amber, or New Zealand's endangered large Wellington spargrass weevil—of a resilience and ingenuity oddly reflective of our own. Insect Ecology has let generations of agriculturalists, ecologists, entomologists, environmental scientists, foresters, professionals, and students understand the insects' world, and ours.

With unerring detail and breadth, Insect Ecology has described for generations of professionals the interactions and dynamics of the world's richest group of species—the insects—whose wildly various 8 million forms have been the source of endless fascination and study. From caterpillars to the goliath beetle, from the adult copper butterfly to the agromyzid fly, the insect universe is at once ordinary and exotic, capturing, in microcosm, nature's complexity and beauty.

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