



Plant Evolution in the Mediterranean

John D. Thompson

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Plant Evolution in the Mediterranean integrates a diverse and scattered literature to produce a synthetic account of plant evolutionary ecology. The central theme is differentiation, both among and within species in the contemporary flora of the Mediterranean basin. This approach is developed by attempting to link population processes to species evolution, and by examining the variation and evolution of ecological function in the context of spatial habitat variation and regional history. The Mediterranean is a region with a complex geological and climatic history and a highly heterogeneous landscape in which human activities have greatly modified local conditions and the spatial configuration of habitats. This book explores the evolutionary processes which have shaped plant evolution in the context of these major influences on vegetation.

The book is structured around two central topics in evolutionary ecology: diversity and adaptation. The Mediterranean region is a hotspot of plant biodiversity, a key ingredient of which is its richness in endemic species. A primary question motivating the first section of this book concerns the role of historical factors and spatial environmental variation in the evolution of such endemism. The Mediterranean landscape is also characterised by dramatic variations in ecological conditions, often over short distances. A second focus is on the ecological and historical factors which mediate dispersal, reproduction, and adaptive trait variation in the Mediterranean mosaic.

This accessible text is aimed at students and researchers in plant evolutionary biology, ecology, biogeography, population biology, and systematics. It will also be of interest to plant scientists and botanical societies worldwide.

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