

Honours Project: opportunity for a student

Forest restoration and the accumulation of ant, amphipod
and Staphylinid beetle diversity:
when is ecosystem function restored?



Background

Large tracts of rainforest and eucalypt forest have been cleared for agriculture and grazing on the Atherton Tableland in north Queensland. A movement to improve the conservation value of this land by converting it into secondary-growth or plantation has led to a number of restoration initiatives over the last 40 years, but the restoration and recovery processes have been poorly documented and lessons are difficult to

extract. In this study, we will investigate the pattern of accumulation of biodiversity and biomass at forest restoration sites on the Atherton Tableland.

Project aims

The overall aim is to determine at what stage of forest restoration ecosystem function is likely to be restored. Ants, amphipods and staphylinid (Rove) beetles are the target taxa in this study. These taxa have all proven to have environmental indicator value. Specific aims include:

- to collect data on the abundance and diversity of target taxa, and site attributes (e.g. age of regrowth, accumulation of litter, mean annual rainfall) at more than 20 restoration sites of various ages
- to identify the environmental determinants of community composition in these faunal groups



Resources

Funding is available to support transport and other field requirements, and air travel between Darwin and Cairns.

Staff involved

Assoc. Prof. Michael Lawes

For more information

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Amphipod.