Plasticity and biotic interactions mediate plant persistence in a changing world

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Dabney 575

Understanding how plants respond to drivers of global change is critical for biodiversity conservation, yet the ecological and evolutionary mechanisms underlying these responses, as well as the context-dependent nature of such responses, are often poorly understood. My thesis explores the roles of plasticity, genetic variation, and biotic interactions in the persistence of the dominant North American shrub, *Rhododendron maximum*, under climatic change and invasion-driven forest disturbance. Overall, I show that plant persistence in a changing world will be dependent on trait plasticity, plant population, and the interplay between plant-soil interactions and aboveground contexts.