**Cover letter**

* Which is the precise problem addressed in this article? *We tested the hypothesis that cities are composed of different degrees of ecological novelty by studying four urban habitats with differing degrees of management and human legacy; and comparing them with two reference pre-urban habitats.*
* Which are the unique contributions of the article? *We used a compositional novelty index based on multidimensional ordination, which is straightforward to calculate and only requires species co-occurrence data for urban and reference habitats.*
* How does this research contribute to Urban Forestry & Urban Greening? *Our results support an integrative approach to urban landscape management that favors habitat heterogeneity by passive rewilding of managed park lawns, non-intervention on residential vacant lots, direct restoration of industrial vacant lots, and conservation of natural and agricultural habitat remnants as sources of native species.*