

Seed cleaning of *Cupania vernalis* (Sapindaceae) by ants: edge effect in a highland forest in south-east Brazil

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The integrity of ecological interactions, such as pollination and seed dispersal, has been recognized as important for long-term conservation of biodiversity (Asquith *et al.* 1999, Buchmann & Nabhan 1997, Howe 1984, Pizo 1997). This is illustrated by the fact that the loss of large-bodied animals like birds and mammals after habitat fragmentation can result in population changes or even extinction of many plant species (Silva & Tabarelli 2000). In the absence of primary seed dispersers (vertebrates), the importance of invertebrates such as ants, that can carry or clean seeds, probably increases.

Keywords

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