

STATISTICAL METHODS FOR ANALYZING INSECT COMMUNITIES

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Forest insect communities are complex and diverse systems. Spatial and temporal scales are complicated further by the great amount of taxonomic diversity. The information that results from forest ecological studies can sometimes be overwhelming, leaving the entomologist wondering how the data will ever be analyzed. Multivariate analysis is a branch of ecological statistics that allows the examination of numerous variables simultaneously. The methods are computationally difficult, but new desktop computing technology has provided entomologists access to otherwise unavailable analyses. Community data can be reduced to more understandable proportions, often revealing meaningful underlying community structure.