



# The Ecology and Evolution of Ant-Plant Interactions (Interspecific Interactions)

By Victor Rico-Gray, Paulo S. Oliveira

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Ants are probably the most dominant insect group on Earth, representing ten to fifteen percent of animal biomass in terrestrial ecosystems. Flowering plants, meanwhile, owe their evolutionary success to an array of interspecific interactions—such as pollination, seed dispersal, and herbivory—that have helped to shape their great diversity. *The Ecology and Evolution of Ant-Plant Interactions* brings together findings from the scientific literature on the coevolution of ants and plants to provide a better understanding of the unparalleled success of these two remarkable groups, of interspecific interactions in general, and ultimately of terrestrial biological communities.

*The Ecology and Evolution of Ant-Plant Interactions* synthesizes the dynamics of ant-plant interactions, including the sources of variation in their outcomes. Victor Rico-Gray and Paulo S. Oliveira capture both the emerging appreciation of the importance of these interactions within ecosystems and the developing approaches that place studies of these interactions into a broader ecological and evolutionary context. The collaboration of two internationally renowned scientists, *The Ecology and Evolution of Ant-Plant Interactions* will become a standard reference for understanding the complex interactions between these two taxa.

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**The Ecology and Evolution of Ant-Plant Interactions (Interspecific Interactions)** By Victor Rico-Gray, Paulo S. Oliveira Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #2219076 in eBooks
- Published on: 2008-09-15
- Released on: 2008-09-15
- Format: Kindle eBook

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

"I have been waiting for somebody to write this book! It's a remarkable synthesis of deep and wide-ranging conceptual issues, a feast of natural history, and an up-to-date summary of the field. Given that plants feed the world and ants eat it, churn it, and direct traffic, it is no wonder that ant-plant interactions are so pervasive. Rico-Gray and Oliveira have succeeded in producing a book that will drive the field for at least a decade, and one that will have far-reaching impacts on anybody interested in the nature of how species interact."

(Anurag Agrawal, Cornell University)

"Victor Rico-Gray and Paulo Oliveira, both foremost researchers exploring the enormously diverse ant-plant associations, have written an impressive, authoritative monograph on this subject. This is an important book; it provides a timely critical account of a fundamental body of work. The overarching theme is of great interest to ecologists in general and in particular to social insect biologists."

(Bert Hoelldobler, Arizona State University)

"A reader can sense the authors' delight and fascination with the subject on every page of *The Ecology and Evolution of Ant-Plant Interactions*. The breadth and depth of Rico-Gray and Oliveira's experience and understanding, and the enthusiasm with which these are transmitted to paper, is inspirational. Clearly and authoritatively written, rich with citations, and comprehensive, the book will remain an essential reference for decades."

(Peter W. Price, Regents' Professor Emeritus, Northern Arizona University)

"The ecology and evolution of ant-plant interactions is an essential book for anyone who currently studies ant-plant interactions. It will also serve as required reading for graduate students who are beginning work on topics in this field. More generally, it should appeal to anyone with an interest in the ecology and evolution of mutualism."

(John Mull *Ecology*)

"[This book] will be appreciated not only by professional myrmecologists but also by other entomologists and ecologists in general, students, and all trying to understand the amazing natural processes related to this group of social insects."

(M. Suvak *Thaiszia Journal of Botany*)

"This book is a must-read for ant-plant researchers, and should be assigned reading for graduate students on plant-animal interactions. It is the most current and thorough treatment of ant-plant interactions to come along in over a decade."

(Megan E. Frederickson *Ecoscience*)

"An essential compendium of information for anyone in the field of ants, plants, and their interactions."

Moreover, it places ant-plant interactions in the larger context of the geographic mosaic of coevolution, and broader ecological theory, and will be a useful text for ecologists generally. Rico-Gray and Oliveira have produced a thorough and well-timed synthesis of an incredibly diverse field."

(Kirsten L. Abbott *Integrative and Comparative Biology*)

"An authoritative and well-rounded book. It ranges widely over the subject and has a nice historical view, as well as being up-to-date, so that everyone can learn from it. . . . It is worth buying."

(Mark Young *Bulletin of the British Ecological Society*)

"The broad synthesis and overview that Rico-Gray and Oliveira have provided on this hugely diverse subject, coupled with the comprehensiveness of their literature review, place this book firmly in the 'must-have' category for anyone interested in ants and plants and of great interest for ecologists interested more generally in the ecology and evolution of interspecific interactions."

(Duncan Mackay *Austral Ecology*)

About the Author

**Victor Rico-Gray** is a research scientist of ecology and Chairman of the Applied Ecology Department at the Instituto de Ecologia, A. C. in Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico. **Paulo S. Oliveira** is professor of ecology at the Universidade Estadual de Campinas, São Paulo, Brazil.

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