

Ecological niche of sclerophyllous forest in southern and western Europe

Purpose: This project aims at identifying *Quercus suber* L., *Q. ilex* L. and *Q. rotundifolia* Lam. sclerophyllous forest types and analyzing their spatial distribution, along climatic gradients in Europe. Vegetation types will be identified according to species composition, environmental parameters (climate, topography, ecological indicators) and “spatial arrangement“ of data (i.e. geographical distribution). In particular we will test the “finite mixture model” which is particularly useful to incorporate different classification criteria in a single analytical shell. For methodological comparison, the results will be explored with divisive classification analysis (modified TWINSpan) and formalized classification (Cocktail method), to obtain unequivocal assignment of relevés to defined vegetation types.

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Estimated time frame: 2012–2014