Spontaneous vegetation and management in urban agriculture spaces : a case study on orchards and pastures in Poitiers, France

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Résumé

Urban Agriculture (UA) serves food functions but also provides refuges for biodiversity and spaces for human interaction. Thus, thanks to the roles it plays in the social and ecological functioning of the city, it can be considered as Urban Green Spaces (UGS). We now know that UGS represent habitats for many species and contribute to the ecological connectivity of urban landscapes. However, research in urban ecology on the state of spontaneous vegetation in UA spaces remains relatively poor for orchards and pastures. This study, combining both the geography and ecology methods, aims to identify the interactions between the practices of the actors involved in the management of urban orchards and pastures (elected officials, technicians, farmers, etc.), the actors' relationships with nature, and the biodiversity. Specifically, this study analyzes landscape and management factors that can explain the species richness and composition of the vegetation diversity. To do this, we carried out floristic inventories and semi-structured interviews with managers to determine both the biodiversity and management practices encountered in the areas studied. Furthermore, the studied areas were spatially contextualized through detailed mapping of the surrounding land use. The results show that management is the factor with the strongest impact on species richness, surpassing other factors such as plot size. The vegetation composition appears to be influenced by management and the level of urbanization. We conclude that UA spaces, especially the most urbanized ones, can effectively contribute to urban biodiversity conservation provided they are subject to appropriate management.

Mots-Clés: plant, biodiversity, urban agriculture, management

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