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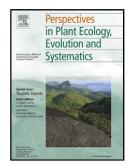
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Modelling understorey dynamics in temperate forests under global change— challenges and perspectives

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Highlights

- Understoreys are an important functional component of temperate forests
- Global change affects understorey composition via a range of pathways
- We review 14 published understorey models and evaluate their comprehensiveness
- None of the existing models fully accounts for all potential effects of global change
- We suggest several ways forward to develop a next generation of understorey models

Abstract

The understorey harbours a substantial part of vascular plant diversity in temperate forests and plays an important functional role, affecting ecosystem processes such as nutrient cycling and overstorey regeneration. Global change, however, is putting these understorey communities on trajectories of change, potentially altering and reducing their functioning in the future. Developing mitigation strategies to safeguard the diversity and functioning of temperate forests in the future is challenging and requires improved predictive capacity. Process-based models that predict understorey community composition over time, based on first principles of ecology, have the potential to guide mitigation endeavours but such approaches are rare. Here, we review fourteen understorey modelling approaches that have been proposed during the last three decades. We evaluate their inclusion of mechanisms that are required to predict the impact of global change on understorey communities. We conclude that none of the currently existing models fully accounts for all processes that we deem important based on empirical and experimental evidence. Based on

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