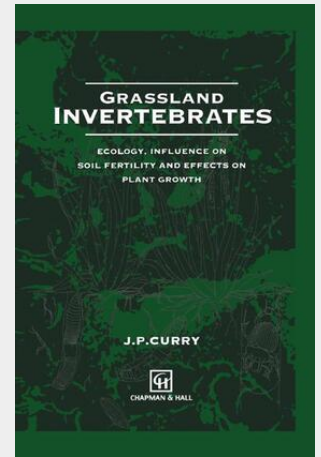


Curry

Grassland Invertebrates

Ecology, influence on soil fertility and effects on plant growth

Grasslands comprise more than a quarter of the Earth's land surface. In addition to supporting a wide range of vertebrates such as domestic livestock and a variety of game species, grassland is the natural habitat for a wide range of invertebrate species, and this book considers those which occur in grassland and their impact on soil fertility and herbage growth. It describes grassland as a habitat for invertebrates, the groups which occur there and their abundance. An extensive literature on grassland invertebrates scattered through numerous scientific journals and reports is drawn on in an attempt to develop an overview. In the opening chapter the major grassland types are considered and the features which influence the distribution and abundance of the invertebrates which inhabit them are discussed. Next the major taxonomic groups are reviewed in turn, with a brief account of their biology and ecology and of their ecosystem role. Some general features of grassland invertebrate communities are then described and the factors which influence the population densities of their constituent species are considered. Particular attention is given to the ways in which populations are influenced by management practices. The final and largest chapter deals with the various ways in which invertebrates influence important grassland processes through ingestion of organic matter, interaction with injurious species is considered, with particular emphasis on the potential for achieving this through manipulating grassland management practices.



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