

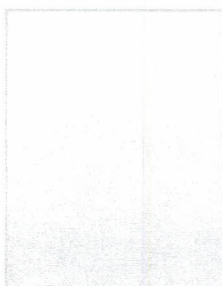


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Nurse tree canopy shape, the subcanopy distribution of cacti, and facilitation in the Sonoran Desert

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Edition/Format: Article : English

Publication: The Journal of the Torrey Botanical Society, v137 n2 (04 2010): 277-286

Database: BioOne

Other Databases: [Elsevier](#)

Summary: Facilitation between different plant species has been documented in terrestrial and marine ecosystems worldwide. The classic example of such positive relationships, the large keystone saguaro cactus (*Cercidium* nurse's trunk than to the north, and 3) saguaro cacti show a distributional preference to dense-canopied nurses. Variations in nurse canopies become crucial elements of the microenvironment and will alter patterns of establishment and survival of the protégé species that rely on them as even small changes can dramatically alter distributional patterns and expected survivorship. Nurse protection may lead to patterns quite different from the seed rain, and ultimately has a dominant role in the population dynamics of the species. [Read less](#)

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Details

Document Type: Article

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ISSN: 1095-5674

OCLC Number: 4630495688

Language Note: English

Notes: Research Articles
D rezner , T. D. (Department of Geography, N430 Ross, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, Ontario, M3J 1P3, Canada). Nurse tree canopy shape, the subcanopy distribution of cacti, and facilitation in the Sonoran Desert, J. Torrey Bot. Soc. 137: 277-286. 2010.

Awards:

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Facilitation between different plant species has been documented in terrestrial and marine ecosystems worldwide. The classic example of such positive relationships, the large keystone saguaro cactus (Cercidium nurse's trunk than to the north, and 3) saguaro cacti show a distributional preference to dense-canopied nurses. Variations in nurse canopies become crucial elements of the microenvironment and will alter patterns of establishment and survival of the protégé species that rely on them as even small changes can dramatically alter distributional patterns and expected survivorship. Nurse protection may lead to patterns quite different from the seed rain, and ultimately has a dominant role in the population dynamics of the species.

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