

SEASONALLY DRY DECIDUOUS FORESTS: DIVERSITY AND SOILS IN ARBOREAL COMMUNITIES

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Summary

This chapter presents a perspective of the diversity of tree species on the Seasonal Deciduous Forest in Central Brazil and its relation with the edaphic features. Seasonally dry deciduous tropical forests occur worldwide in hot seasonal climates occupying a smaller area than the rain forests. These forests have been intensively converted into pastures and croplands. In Central Brazil these forests grow on fertile soils, on patches of limestone outcrops within a savanna matrix, where mining is an additional threat. In the Cerrado domain they occur on eutrophic and mesotrophic soils but rarely are found on dystrophic soils. The dry forests, composed by valuable timber species are extremely vulnerable and need actions for conservation and sustainable management. The selective extraction of timber species elsewhere and the absence of sustainable management practices are selectively eroding the natural reserves of these species and can compromise the existence and conservation of these populations in these scattered communities in the Central Brazil. A large quantity of low density species is another constraint for conservation leading to the need of a conservation network including many sites.

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