

Klötzli, F., Walther, G.-R. (ed.): **Conference on Recent Shifts in Vegetation Boundaries of Deciduous Forests, Especially Due to General Global Warming.** – Birkhäuser-Verlag, Basel – Boston – Berlin 1999. ISBN 3-7643-6086-0 (hardcover)(Basel *etc.*); ISBN 0-8176-6086-0 (Boston). 342 pp., sFr 168.00, DM 198.00, oeS 1446.00.

The most important problem of recent climate, "global change" associated with permanent warming, has released vegetation shifts all over the world. Recent warming has lasted longer than before, and there is no evidence of such a dramatic spread of laurophyllous species before present. This process—which has been called laurophyllisation (laurophyll, laurineous, laurel-like)—was the main theme for discussion at a meeting held at the Centro Stefano Franscini, Monte Verità, Ascona, Switzerland, in 1998. The Monte Verità—a small hill 321 m a.s.l., situated at the southern edge of the Alps close to lake Lago Maggiore—belongs to areas where the process of laurophyllisation can clearly be observed.

The reviewed book has appeared in the series "Proceedings of the Centro Stefano Franscini, Ascona", edited by H. Flüeler (ETH Zürich). The book presents 18 case studies from the relevant regions in Brazil, Georgia, Chile, China, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, and the USA. The introductory papers present the above-mentioned locality, and deal with recent vegetation shifts in Switzerland and climatic influence on vegetation changes, with verification on regional scale of the laurophyllisation, and with causes of shifts in vegetation in the past and present. Further papers are devoted to potential impacts of climate change on mountain forests, to the role of fires, ecological risk assessment, lianisation and therophytation as complimentary processes of laurophyllisation, and to vegetation shifts in Central Europe, mainly under urban climate. Majority of remaining papers deal with evergreen broad-leaved vegetation under climatic warming in Colchis (Georgia), in Ireland, on Mt. Etna (Italy), in East China, in Japan, and in Eastern North America. Grassland–forest boundaries in southern Brazil, and *Nothofagus*–forests in southern Chile are discussed in the last two papers.

The seminar was accompanied with three workshops devoted to professional discussions on the following themes: I. Laurophyllisation: Monitoring in a global context ("Global Change"), II. Research priorities in ecotonal areas from evergreen broad-leaved to deciduous forests in Europe, and III. Importance of laurophyllisation for Swiss forest policy.

The book summarises approaches—other than usual—to global change warming and to the relationships between plant vegetation and its functioning. It is well produced, and contains numerous references to recent literature. However, even a short subject index would be welcome. It can be recommended to scientists and graduate students interested in environmental sciences, and problems associated with global climate change.

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