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Session #12

Piper aduncum is an alien tree from South America, fast colonising New Guinean lowlands to the extent of becoming the most abundant tree in some of the lowland secondary forests. Recently, it has been also spreading to higher elevations, up to 2,000 m asl. We have studied species of caterpillars (Lepidoptera) colonising *P. aduncum* and feeding on its foliage at two locations, at 100 m asl. in a lowland forest in Madang, where the tree is particularly abundant, and at 1,800 m asl. in a montane forest in Chimbu, where the tree is approaching its upper limit of distribution. We have compared species richness, species composition and abundance of caterpillar communities between low and high elevations and compared them with caterpillar communities from native trees.



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