

Importance of red wood ants (*Formica rufa* group) in European forest soils. (S07-risch114400-Oral)

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Abstract:

Red wood ants (*Formica rufa* group) are commonly found in many conifer and mixed conifer-hardwoods forests of Europe. These ants build large above-ground nests (mounds) composed of litter collected from the surrounding forest stands. Although the number of red wood ant nests per hectare can be high in certain forest types, very little is known on the contribution of these mounds to forest soil nutrient cycling. Consequently, soil studies in European forests have not considered the possible contribution of red wood ant mounds to below-ground carbon (C) and nutrient pools. Therefore, a study was established to gain information on the distribution of red wood ants in various European forest ecosystems, and to estimate their contribution to ecosystem C and nutrient pools.

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