
2007 Honorary Member Award

Marilyn Ball

The Honorary Member Award in the Society is given to a distinguished ecologist who has made exceptional contributions to ecology and whose principal residence and site of ecological research are outside of the United States and Canada. Up to three awards may be made in any one year until a total of 20 living Honorary Members is reached. This year's recipient is Marilyn Ball.

Dr. Ball currently leads the Ecosystems Dynamics group at the Australian National University. She is internationally acknowledged as a true leader in the field of plant ecophysiology. She is the rare researcher who has both the vision and the proven ability to apply biophysical and physiological understanding of plant processes to field ecology. Her work stands out for its rich physiological detail as well as her unique ecological insights. She has produced innovative research in several distinct fields, each of which has gained international recognition. Through groundbreaking discoveries that provide entirely new perspectives, Dr. Ball has consistently transformed the way scientists think about ecological relationships.



Dr. Ball's research provides excellent examples of the importance of interactions with multiple factors, and elegantly demonstrates how ecophysiology can be used to address important ecological questions regarding species distributions, regeneration, and ecosystem restoration. Some of her research topics have included: the combined effects of light and salinity on photosynthesis and growth in mangroves; the interactions between temperature and light stress and their importance in the regeneration of trees; the effect of photoinhibition on terrestrial plant survival; and the responses of vegetation to global climate and atmospheric change. Her ongoing work has important implications for the management and restoration of coastal ecosystems and mangrove communities.

One of Dr. Ball's most admirable traits is the passion she exudes for research. She loves being a scientist and effortlessly transfers that enthusiasm to others. She is a charming and compassionate person who goes out of her way to make time for students and junior scientists. She is widely regarded for her track record of producing excellent students, who display not only rigorous training in physiological methods and experimental design, but even more impressively, clear thinking and creative scientific insight.