

MERCER AWARD

Thomas G. Whitham

The George Mercer Award is given annually to a young ecologist in recognition of outstanding ecological research published within the preceding two years. The award for 1980 goes to Dr. Thomas G. Whitham for his paper entitled "Habitat selection by *Pemphigus* aphids in response to resource limitation and competition," which appeared in *Ecology* 59:1164–1176. By using a system in which the fitness of each individual organism and its available resources could be measured, and by applying keen observations and experimental manipulations, Whitham demonstrated that intraspecific competition for resources is a significant force in affecting habitat selection and distribution in these insects. He developed a sophisticated approach to analyzing complex eco-

logical and evolutionary relationships between the animal populations and their food resources, a topic that has long been of interest to ecologists.

Dr. Whitham received a B.S. degree from Iowa State University, an M.S. degree from Ohio State University, and his Ph.D. from the University of Utah. He is currently Research Ecologist with the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff, where he is pursuing studies of pollination ecology and optimal foraging theory, as well as continuing his work on plant-parasite co-evolution and habitat selection.

George Mercer Award
Selection Committee:

Richard T. Holmes
Dennis H. Knight
George O. Batzli



Mercer Award winner Thomas Whitham (center) with James Wick (left), chairman of the Biological Sciences Department of Northern Arizona University where Whitham is an adjunct professor, and David Chase (right), Acting Director of the Museum of Northern Arizona.