



**SDI Review Form 1.6**

Journal Name:	<a href="#">International Journal of Plant &amp; Soil Science</a>
Manuscript Number:	2014_IJPSS_13067
Title of the Manuscript:	<b>An understory comparison of the exotic <i>Phellodendron amurense</i> Rupr. (RUTACEAE) and adjacent native canopy species in an urban and suburban woodland</b>
Type of the Article	<b>Original Research Article</b>

**General guideline for Peer Review process:**

This journal's peer review policy states that **NO** manuscript should be rejected only on the basis of '**lack of Novelty**', provided the manuscript is scientifically robust and technically sound.

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(<http://www.sciencedomain.org/page.php?id=sdi-general-editorial-policy#Peer-Review-Guideline>)



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**PART 1: Review Comments**

	<b>Reviewer's comment</b>	<b>Author's comment</b> <i>(if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)</i>
<b><u>Compulsory</u></b> REVISION comments	<p>1.</p> <p>a. The statistical analysis procedures are not clearly described. Furthermore, it seems that the authors did not use appropriate FACTORIAL analysis of variance in their analyses. Then it would be possible to compare different canopy types and sites instead of analyzing them separately.</p> <p>b. I am not sure how the authors analyzed their data, since they had four plots underneath each tree. Did they use the mean of each of the four plots per tree or each plot was considered a sampling unit? The choice here has important consequences for the analyses.</p> <p>2. The comparison of species richness should be done using rarefaction curves (see Magurran, A.E. 2004 – Measuring Biological Diversity). The way it was carried out was not appropriate, since the number of species is highly dependent on abundance.</p> <p>3. The experimental design for what the authors called “canopy analysis” does not seem appropriate for me. If the authors wanted to assess the correlation between the canopy and the understory, the photographs should have been taken under each sampled tree and not in a random place within the study site. That’s why probably they did not find any significant associations between canopy cover and the variables tested. I strongly recommend</p>	<p>a. I have described these more clearly in the revision</p> <p>b. these were analyzed as separate units, I added this to the paper for clarity</p> <p>2. In this paper we are examining only the species richness as a comparative measure from one treatment to the next. The rarefaction curve is very useful for determining sampling size but not for our goals.</p> <p>3. I will clarify the use of the canopy analysis in the paper. The equipment used captures an area far greater than the individual trees. Photographing each tree sampled would lead to extensive overlap in the sampled canopies.</p> <p>5. Agreed, I have added references.</p> <p>6. Agreed, I have adjusted this along with number 5 above.</p>



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	<p>excluding this from the manuscript.</p> <p>4. There are some parts of the text that are not clearly written or contain inadequate use of scientific language.</p> <p>5. There are several relevant references related to biological invasions that are missing from the text (e.g. Ragan Callaway, Daniel Simberloff, Marcel Rejmanék etc.). The references used are very limited and needs updating.</p> <p>6. The authors barely discuss their results based on other studies and therefore the discussion is very superficial. A little bit of which should be in the discussion is in "conclusions" (which is not appropriate) but even so it is necessary to go deeper into the topic, and present results from other studies in order to try to explain the observed results.</p>	
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<b><u>Minor</u></b> REVISION comments	<p>1. Lines 98, 99, 106. Please report the number of trees (plots) for each species. E.g. line 98 instead of 72 plots, report 18 trees.</p> <p>2. Figures should be remade, using panels for the same theme (e.g. density in one panel: A – total density; B – density of natives). Authors should also use letters to indicate significant differences between bars. Instead of confidence intervals, error bars should represent the standard error.</p> <p>3. Check for the unit square meter. The word “quadrat” after that does not make sense. E.g. line 147 (individuals per m2 quadrat).</p> <p>4. Why did the authors not report the species richness for only the natives? It would be interesting, as they reported the separate density for natives.</p>	<p>1. This paper is reporting the data on the understory as opposed to the trees themselves so for consistency we have decided not to change this.</p> <p>2. ?</p> <p>3. done, correction made, we had included it to define the size but it is redundant.</p> <p>4. We decided not to only for brevity. This can be deduced from other data and didn't add to the paper.</p>
<b><u>Optional/General</u></b> comments	<p>This is an interesting study about one invasive species and its understory compared to a native abundant species in the same site. The authors compare the understory between “canopy types” (native x non-native) and between two sites. However, there are some problems in the experimental design and statistical analyses that should be carefully reviewed. Additionally, the discussion is very superficial and there are very important references missing.</p>	