

Foreword

The new, second volume of the 29th issue of *Ecological Questions* contains 7 papers. They attempt to answer the question: how do various environmental factors induce changes and variability in the structure and functioning of ecosystems, communities or plant and human populations?

The first paper presents changes in the biomass of 16 two-needle pine taxa in the transcontinental gradient covering almost the whole of Eurasia, from the British Isles to Japan. The second paper presents temporal changes in the habitat and the structure of phytocoenoses after afforestation of heathland in Pomerania, Poland. The paper describes a local case but the process of transformation of a heath-dominated open landscape into a forest landscape has been observed during the last two centuries over large areas of the European Lowlands.

Two further papers are related to the impact of environmental conditions on tall greenery in big cities. One of them, based on the case of selected streets in Warsaw, presents quantitative losses in trees and the extent of differences between the value of the removed and newly-planted trees. The other paper presents a comparison between two pollen seasons for three species of trees and shrubs in relation to environmental conditions of a large city.

The fifth paper in this volume of *Ecological Questions* presents morphological changes of three isolated populations of the mountain species *Veratrum lobelianum* growing in different light and soil conditions at lowlands localities.

The sixth paper is devoted to human health issues in a polluted environment. It presents how environmental factors and changes in the parameters of the state of metabolic processes in the human body indicated epigenetic transformation of chromatin. The authors discussed in detail molecular mechanisms of epigenetic rearrangement of humoral systems of the renal function regulators.

The last paper is related to environmental pollution caused by polymer waste and it presents results of the research on enzymatic degradation of biostatic materials based on polylactide.

We hope that the results presented in some of the papers will serve as reference points for comparisons on a larger spatio-temporal scale, e.g. as the one included in the first paper.

Editorial Board