
W. S. Cooper Award

The William S. Cooper Award is given by the Society in honor of one of the founders of modern plant ecology, in recognition of an outstanding contribution in geobotany, physiographic ecology, plant succession, or the distribution of organisms along environmental gradients.

The 2011 recipients of the Cooper Award are Margaret Davis, Ruth Shaw, and Julie Etterson for their 2005 paper, Evolutionary responses to changing climate, published in *Ecology*.

In their paper, Margaret Davis and her co-authors present a prescient synthesis of ecological and evolutionary processes in plant populations during periods of rapid climate change. This paper has led the way in breaking down the classic paradigm that evolutionary responses to Quaternary climate change were slow and largely irrelevant. Instead, they present a comprehensive and compelling synthesis of evidence that plant populations can and do evolutionarily adapt to rapid environmental change. Their work offers a clear road map for future progress as we confront the modern era of rapid environmental change. The work of Davis and her colleagues has, once again, helped identify and clearly outline research questions that will define a research field for a generation to come.



Although the Cooper Award is traditionally given to honor outstanding papers, not careers, this is a fortunate case where both goals can be achieved at once. Dr. Margaret Davis is one of the premier vegetation ecologists of our time. Her pioneering contributions in plant ecology are enormous and varied, and include demonstrating the individualistic responses of plant taxa to Quaternary climate changes, the first estimates of the rate and trajectory of past plant migrations, and advancing the fundamental theory for interpreting vegetation history from fossil pollen records. Her co-authors Ruth Shaw and Julie Etterson are leading population geneticists and have made their own fundamental contributions.