

MERCER AWARD

Richard Karban



The George Mercer Award is given in memory of Lieutenant George Mercer, who was killed in action while serving in the British Army during World War I. The award commemorates the sacrifice of a young naturalist and ecologist by recognizing others who have published papers comparable to those George Mercer might have authored if he had lived. Given annually to an author under the age of 40, the award honors an outstanding paper in ecology published in English during the previous two years.

The 1990 recipient of the Mercer Award is Dr. Richard Karban for his 1989 paper "Community organization of *Erigeron glaucus* foli vores: effects of competition, predation, and host plant" published in *Ecology* 70:1028-1039. This paper presents results of field experiments that examine simultaneously the relative importance of interspecific competition, predation, and host-plant clonal variation on the success of the common herbivores on the seaside daisy. The paper is important because it seeks a comprehensive approach to community organization. Rather than trying to explain patterns of herbivory on the basis

of a single factor, Karban evaluates the relative importance of several factors that might reasonably be expected to affect herbivory on this species. The paper is also a model of excellent scientific research. It describes an important scientific issue that is addressed with appropriate experiments. These experiments are then carefully analyzed and interpreted with succinctness and clarity.

Rick is currently on the faculty at the University of California, Davis, in the Department of Entomology. He received his Ph.D. degree at the University of Pennsylvania. He taught briefly at Haverford College before assuming his present position.

Selection Committee:
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