



# EcoPlant: a phytoecological database that allows the prediction of tree species niches and productivity

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## ► To cite this version:

Christophe Coudun, Jean-Claude J.-C. Gégout, Ingrid Seynave, Christian C. Piedallu. EcoPlant: a phytoecological database that allows the prediction of tree species niches and productivity. 5. Workshop on Vegetation databases and monitoring, Feb 2006, BREMEN, Germany. 38 p. hal-02823112

HAL Id: hal-02823112

<https://hal.inrae.fr/hal-02823112>

Submitted on 6 Jun 2020

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ENGREF: French Institute of Forestry, Agricultural and Environmental Engineering

INRA: French National Institute for Agricultural Research



5th workshop « Vegetation databases »  
Universität Bremen – 24 February 2006

# EcoPlant

a phytoecological database that allows the prediction of  
tree species niche and productivity

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# EcoPlant: why?

There are different **databases** in France to study the different compartments of **ecosystems**

**Pedological** databases: e.g. DONESOL

**Floristic** databases: e.g. SOPHY

**Ecological** databases: e.g. IFN

These databases are **not adapted** to the **quantitative** study of species behaviour to **climate** and physical and chemical **soil parameters**

# Forest phytoecological relevés in France

Many forest **phytoecological relevés** (digitalised or in forest catalogues), scattered **all over France**, with:

List of **all species present** on the relevé with **cover/abundance** data

**Site-specific** environmental description:

physical and chemical **soil** conditions, **climatic** data

**EcoPlant** was created to **group and structure** all those data in order to **study the response** of forest plant species to the **main climatic and edaphic factors** in a **quantitative** way

# Talk divided into three parts

## 1. Description of EcoPlant

- 1.1. Structure of EcoPlant
- 1.2. Description of main variables

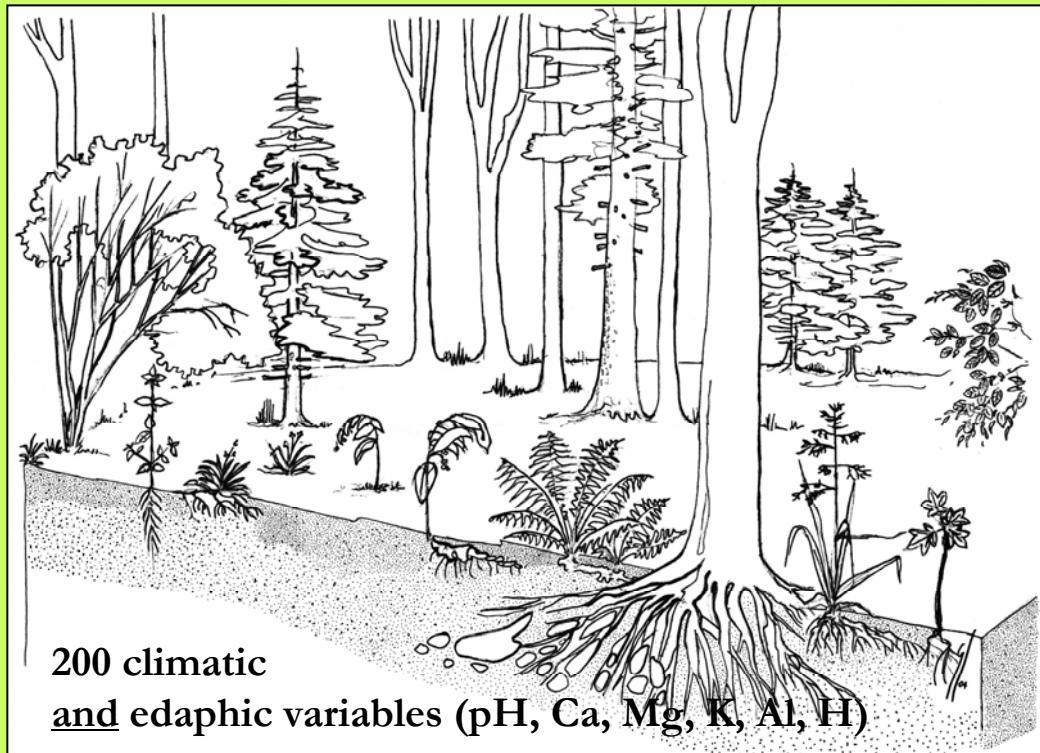
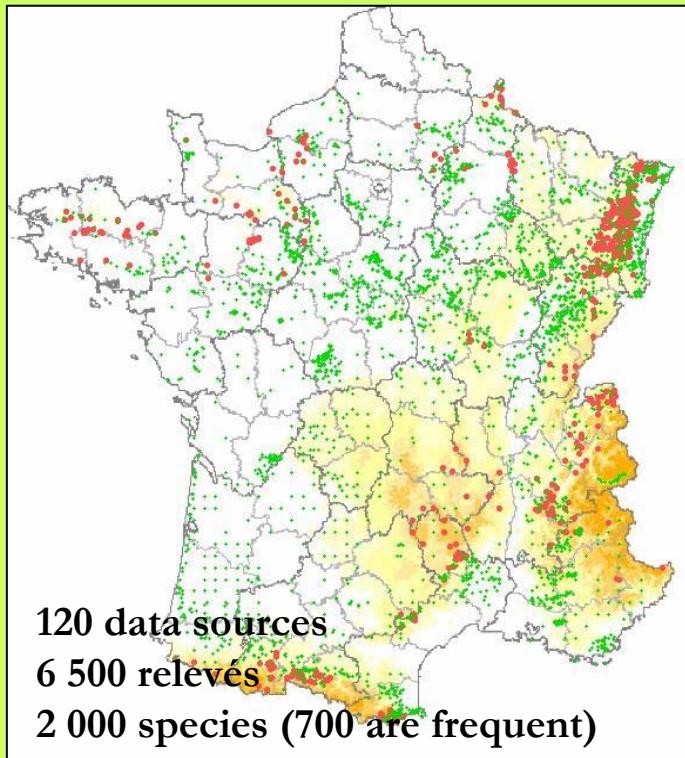
## 2. Main applications of EcoPlant

- 2.1. Ecological indicator values
- 2.2. Ecological niche determination (*Acer campestre*)
- 2.3. Productivity of forest trees (*Fagus sylvatica*)

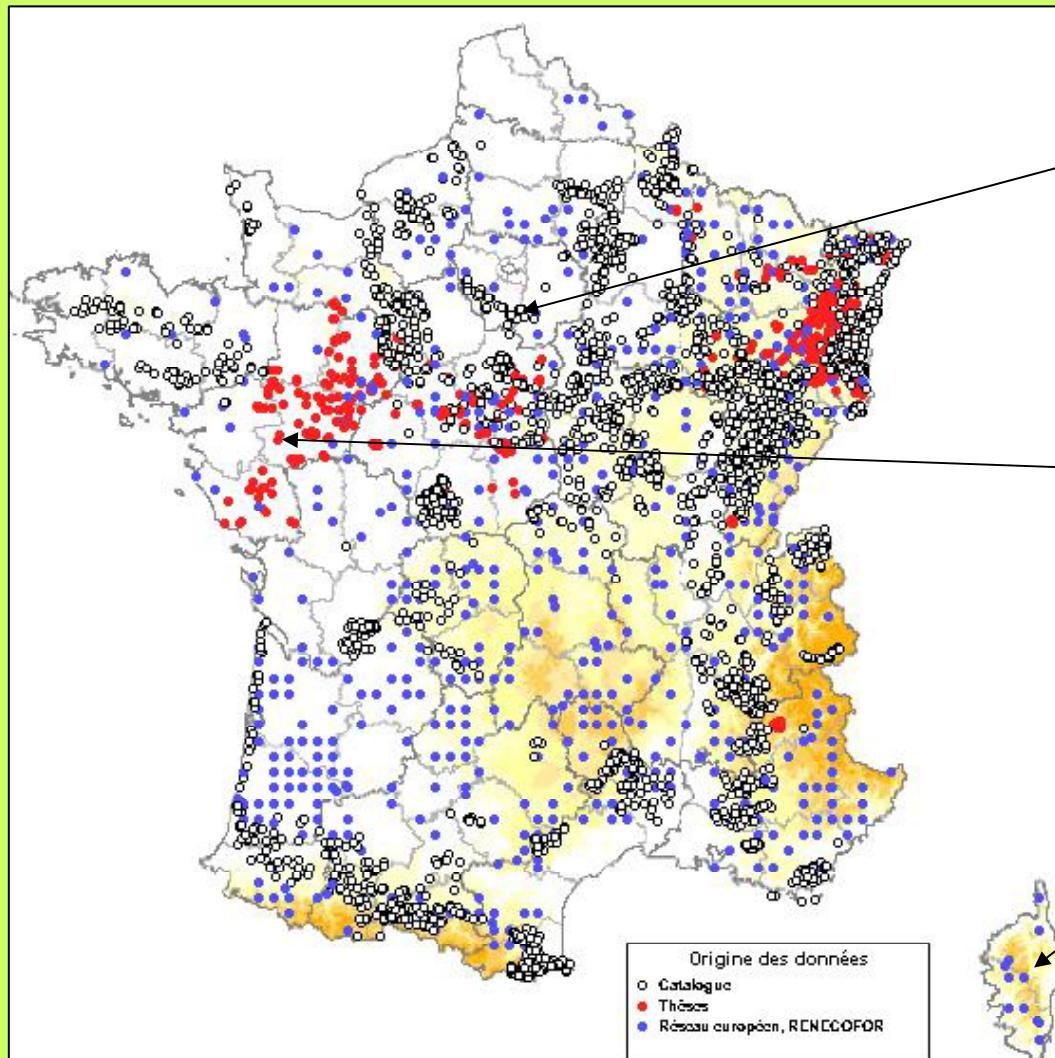
## 3. Perspectives

# 1. Description of EcoPlant

# Introductory overview



# Three main sources of data



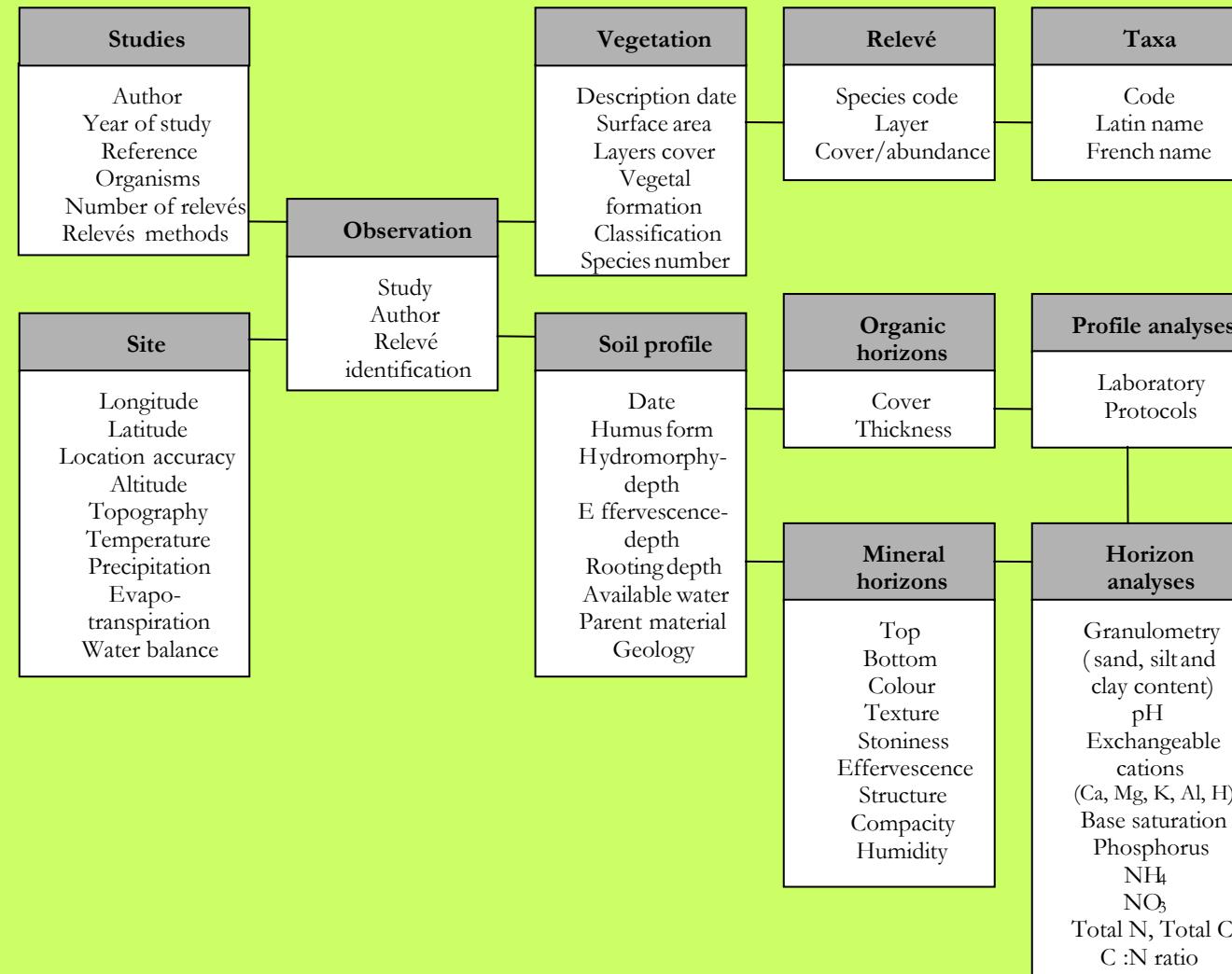
**Catalogues of forest sites**  
(n = 4,282)

**PhD dissertations**  
(n = 1,507)

**Forest networks**  
(n = 643)

## **1.1. Structure of EcoPlant**

# Structure of EcoPlant



## 1.2. Description of main variables

# Background data on study

observations

Etude ✓ Placette ✓ Végétation ✓ Profil ✓ Analyses 2072 sur 6250

**SAISIR L'ETUDE** modifier le titre de l'étude courante

Relevés phytosociologiques avec analyses de sol réalisés dans la forêt des Hospices de Nancy (Vosges)

**Complément :**  
Données non publiées. Équipe Écosystèmes forestiers, ENGREF, Centre de Nancy.

**Titre court :** Hospices Morlot

**Année :** 1994

**Auteurs :** D. Morlot

**Pour le compte de :**

**Financements :**

**Radical étude :** Mor

**Gestionnaires des données :**

**Disponibilité :** ?

**Restrictions :** -

**Méth. échantillonnage :** ?

**Méth. relevé florist. :** placette unique

**Méth. surf. relevé :** estimé

**Méth. stratif. vert. :** A\_av\_H+M

**Méth. recouvr. strates :** \_

**Méth. abondance :** Braun-Blanquet en 7 classes (0, +, ++, +++, ++++, ++++, >+++)

**Système initial coordonn. :** ?

**Relevés floristiques :** 19

**Profils analysés :** 19

**Commentaires :**  
Etude non publiée. Les sols n'ayant pu être renommés selon le R.P. 95 avec certitude, on a gardé le nom C.P.C.S. en commentaire du profil. Pas de

2072 sur 6250

# Location and climatic data

Important for monitoring issues

The screenshot shows a software window titled "observations". The top menu bar includes "Etude", "Placette" (selected), "Végétation", "Profil", and "Analyses". A status bar at the top right indicates "2072 sur 6250". The left side features a vertical toolbar with icons for file operations, a magnifying glass, and a red X. The main area contains several input fields and dropdown menus. On the left, under "SAISIR PLACETTE", fields include "Code station: -2", "Code relevé: 58", "Date observ: 00/00/00", "Stat. juridique: ?", and "Passé: ?". Below these are sections for "Cond. particul: -", "Topographie: milieu de versant", "Drainage: apports et départs éq...", "Pente: -1", "Exposition: -1", "Indice rayon: -1", "Temp moy ann: 6,65", "Ampl moy ann: 15,94", "Precip moy ann: 1541", "ETP: -1", and "Déficit estival: -1". On the right, detailed location information is entered: "Région: Lorraine", "Département: Vosges", "Commune: Plainfaing", "Lieu-dit: Hospice de Nancy", "Parcelle: -1", "Carte topo: -1", and "Précision: +/- 5km (<10km)". Below this are coordinates: "X lambert local: 949 984", "Y lambert local: 1 059 239", "X lambert II: 950 000", "Y lambert II: 2 359 000", "X grades: 5,226", "Y grades: 53,484", "X degrés: 7,04", "Y degrés: 48,14", and "Z altitude: 780". A "Commentaires:" text area is present. At the bottom, a section titled "AUTEURS DES OBSERVATIONS" lists "D. Morlot".

# Vegetation and species abundance data

observations

Etude ✓ Placette ✓ Végétation ✓ Profil ✓ Analyses

SAISIR VEGETATION modifier l'identifiant

Mor10\_V1

Date relevé initial : 00/00/00

Date relevé compl. : 00/00/00

Surface du relevé : -1

Surface communauté : ?

Nb. sp. vasculaires : 15

Nb. sp. total : 18

Nb. sp. non reconnues : -1

Formation végétale : ?

Alliance : ?

Association : ?

Corine biotope : ?

Méthode classement 3 : -

Classement 3 : -1

Commentaires :

Arbres hauts : -1

Arbres bas : -1

Arbustes hauts : -1

Arbustes bas : -1

Herbacés : -1

Mousses : -1

Strate > 2 m : -1

Strate > 50 cm : -1

Trier

Str.	Taxon	AD
A	Abies alba	4
A	Sorbus aucuparia	+
av	Picea abies	2
av	Abies alba	2
av	Fagus sylvatica	1
av	Acer platanoides	1
h	Dryopteris dilatata	1
h	Dryopteris filix-mas	1
h	Lamium galeobolon	1
h	Oxalis acetosella	1
h	Rubus idaeus	1
h	Festuca altissima	1
h	Prenanthes purpurea	1
h	Stellaria nemorum	1
h	Luzula luzuloides	+
h	Luzula sylvatica	+
m	Plagiomnium undulatum	3
m	Atrichum undulatum	+
m	Polytrichum formosum	+

Braun-Blanquet scale

Important for monitoring issues

The screenshot shows the 'SAISIR VEGETATION' (Enter Vegetation) screen of the EcoPlant software. It includes fields for survey details like date and location, vegetation classification (Formation végétale, Alliance, Association, Corine biotope), and stratification (Arbres hauts/bas, Arbustes hauts/bas, Herbacés, Mousses). A large table on the right lists species (Taxon) with their abundance (AD) values. Two annotations are present: a yellow box labeled 'Braun-Blanquet scale' pointing to the abundance column, and another yellow box labeled 'Important for monitoring issues' pointing to the stratification fields.

# Description of soil profiles and horizons

**Monitoring** 2086 sur 6250

SAISIR PROFIL		modifier l'identifiant																																																																																						
<b>Nnb05_P1</b>																																																																																								
C	Date descript :	12/05/92																																																																																						
a	Technique observ. :	?																																																																																						
r	Cause d'arrêt :	?																																																																																						
g	Perturbation :	-																																																																																						
e	Antécédents climat. :	?																																																																																						
n	Formation sup. :	pas de formation superficielle																																																																																						
e	Roche, catégorie :	roche sédimentaire meuble ...																																																																																						
r	Roche, nom complet :	alluvions de la Thur																																																																																						
x	Prof. effervesc. :	-2																																																																																						
Prem. elts calc. :	-2																																																																																							
Méthode RUM :	-		RUM : -1																																																																																					
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>n°</th> <th>nom</th> <th>recv</th> <th>eps</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>0Ln</td> <td>100</td> <td>-1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>0Lv</td> <td>100</td> <td>-1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				n°	nom	recv	eps	1	0Ln	100	-1	2	0Lv	100	-1	3				4																																																																				
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n°	nom	sup	inf	text	EG1 taille	EG1 nature	EG1%	EG2 taille	EG2 nature	EG2%	EGT%	efferv int	efferv loc	Mun1	nat. coul1																																																																									
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n°	nom	Mun2	nat. coul2	%2	Mun3	nat. coul3	%3	Elts part nat.	Elts part ab.	Compacité	Humidit	Struct.	Dévlp.	Regu	Nett	Fin																																																																								
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2	S	-1	hydro oxy	-1	-2	-	0	-	-	?	?	grumele peu net	reg	net	<input type="checkbox"/>																																																																									
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4	Gr	-1	hydro oxy	30	-2	-	0	-	-	?	noyé	massive net	-	-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>																																																																									

# Physical and chemical analyses of soil horizons

**observations**

**Monitoring** 2086 sur 6250

**SAISIR ANALYSES** modifier l'identifiant Nnb05\_A1

Date de prélèvement : 12/05/92  
Méthode prélèvement : ?  
Laboratoire : Pathologie Végétale, Nan...  
Date d'analyse : 00/00/00

Méthode granulo : ?  
Dilution pH : sol/eau = 1/5  
Méthode bases éch : Acétate d'ammonium à pH 7  
Méthode CEC pH sol : -  
Méthode Al éch : -  
Méthode carbone : -  
Méthode P205 autre : ?  
Méthode Fer libre : Jackson (CBD) - complexant citrate  
Méthode Al libre : -

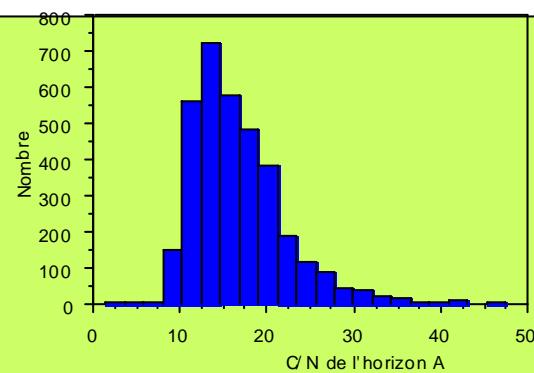
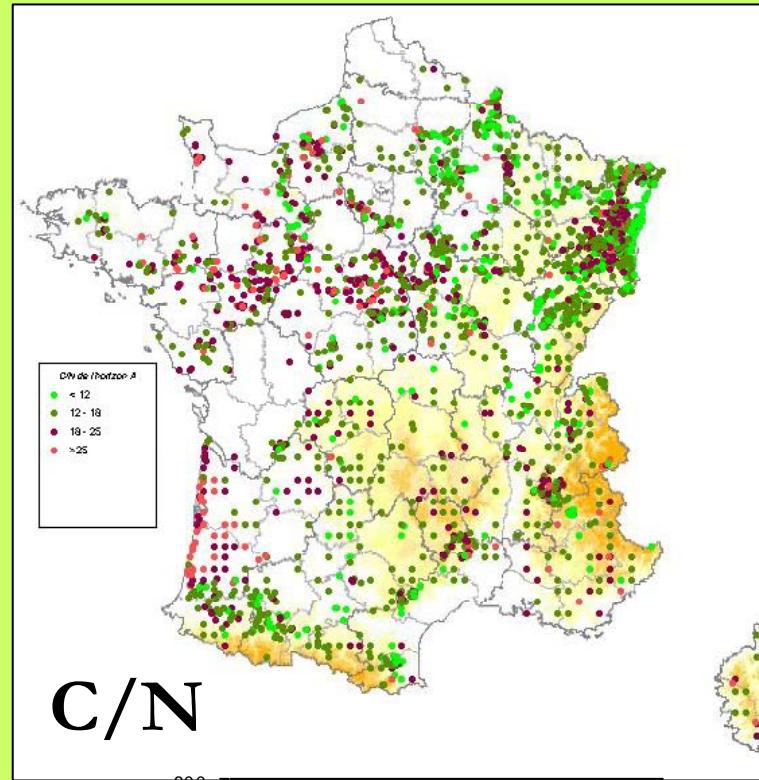
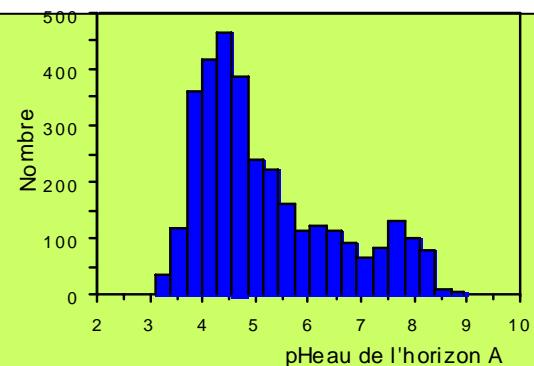
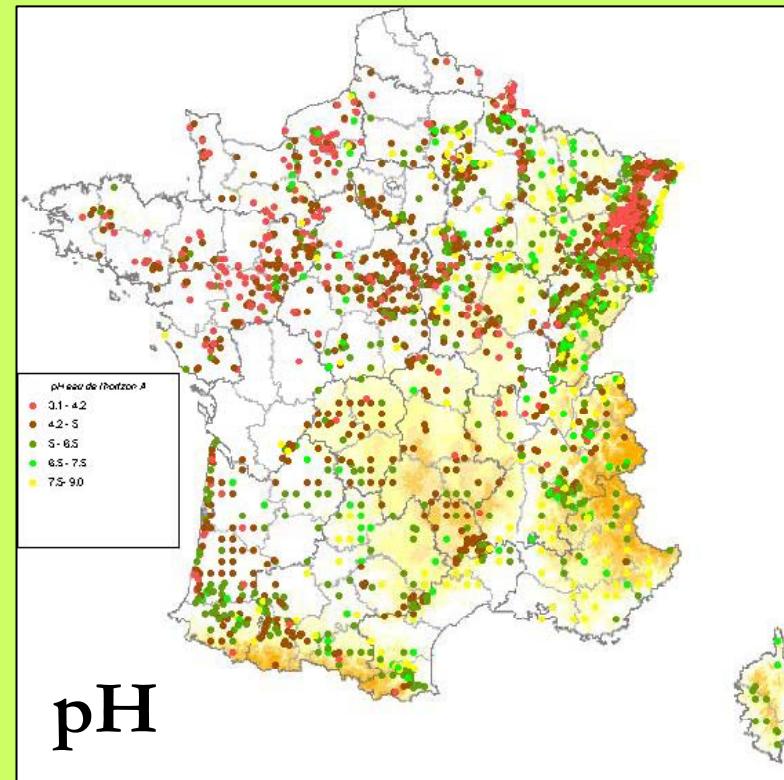
n°	nom	sup	inf	N° analyse	prétraitement	clx1%	grv%	Sg%	Sf%	Lg%	Lf%	Arg%	pHeau	pHKCl	pHCaCl2	calTot	calAct
1	A	0	10	-1	?	-1	-1	140	247	270	157	186	6,4	5,8	-1	0	-1
2	S	10	50	-1	?	-1	-1	196	171	269	209	155	5,8	5,2	-1	0	-1
3	Go	50	80	-1	?	-1	-1	246	154	187	213	200	6,1	4,8	-1	0	-1

n°	nom	Ca	Mg	K	Na	CECMet	CECpH	Al ech	Mn ech	Fe ech	H+	S/TpHsol	S/TpH7	mo	C%	N%	C/N
1	A	19,34	1,93	1,27	0,06	16,9	-1,0	-1,00	-1,00	-1,00	-1,00	-1	100	51,5	29,9	2,3	12,8
2	S	14,85	1,43	0,65	0,03	15,5	-1,0	-1,00	-1,00	-1,00	-1,00	-1	100	21,2	12,3	1,1	10,5
3	Go	11,35	1,09	0,57	0,06	11,1	-1,0	-1,00	-1,00	-1,00	-1,00	-1	100	5,7	3,3	0,3	8,5

n°	nom	Nam	Nnit	P205Du	P205JH	P205 3	méthode densité apparente	densité	Fe libre	Al libre	Hum res
1	A	-1	-1	-1,000	-1,000	0,290	-	-1,00	3,4	-1,0	-1,0
2	S	-1	-1	-1,000	-1,000	0,230	-	-1,00	3,0	-1,0	-1,0
3	Go	-1	-1	-1,000	-1,000	0,270	-	-1,00	2,7	-1,0	-1,0

Commentaires :

# National syntheses of ecological variables



# Summary list of all relevés

**6250 sur 6250**

nº relevé	station	titre court	dep	departement	topographie	alt.	roche	sol RFP
10	-2	Hospices Morlot	88	Vosges	milieu de versant	940	crystalline	Brunisol ol
12	-2	Hospices Morlot	88	Vosges	milieu de versant		sol oc	
20	-2	Hospices Morlot	88	Vosges	milieu de versant		sol ol	
52	-2	Hospices Morlot	88	Vosges	*		sol oc	
54	-2	Hospices Morlot	88	Vosges	milieu de versant		sol oc	
55	-2	Hospices Morlot	88	Vosges	1/3 inférieur de versant		sol ol	
57	-2	Hospices Morlot	88	Vosges	1/3 inférieur de versant		sol ol	
58	-2						sol ol	
59	-2						sol ty	
60	-2						sol ty	
61	-2	Hospices Morlot	88	Vosges	milieu de versant		sol ol	
67	-2	Hospices Morlot	88	Vosges	milieu de versant		sol ol	
68	-2	Hospices Morlot	88	Vosges	milieu de versant		sol ol	
69	-2	Hospices Morlot	88	Vosges	milieu de versant		sol ol	
70	-2	Hospices Morlot	88	Vosges	milieu de versant		sol ol	
71	-2	Hospices Morlot	88	Vosges	milieu de versant		sol ty	
72	-2	Hospices Morlot	88	Vosges	milieu de versant		sol ol	
-1	NBR11	III - Nonnenbruch	68	Haut-Rhin	dépression		tisol	
-1	NBR12	III - Nonnenbruch	68	Haut-Rhin	dépression		tisol	
-1	NBR13	III - Nonnenbruch	68	Haut-Rhin	dépression		tisol	
-1	NBR21	III - Nonnenbruch	68	Haut-Rhin	dépression		tisol	
-1	NBR22	III - Nonnenbruch	68	Haut-Rhin	dépression		tisol	
-1	NBR31	III - Nonnenbruch	68	Haut-Rhin	terrasse nette		tisol	
-1	NBR41	III - Nonnenbruch	68	Haut-Rhin	plateau ou zone plane		isol	
-1	NBR42_1	III - Nonnenbruch	68	Haut-Rhin	plateau ou zone plane		sol mé	
-1	NBR42_2	III - Nonnenbruch	68	Haut-Rhin	dépression		sol mé	
-1	NBR43_1	III - Nonnenbruch	68	Haut-Rhin	dépression		sol sa	
-1	NBR43_2	III - Nonnenbruch	68	Haut-Rhin	plateau ou zone plane		isol	
-1	NBR44	III - Nonnenbruch	68	Haut-Rhin	dépression		sol mé	
-1	NBR51	III - Nonnenbruch	68	Haut-Rhin	plateau ou zone plane		sol sa	
-1	NBR52	III - Nonnenbruch	68	Haut-Rhin	plateau ou zone plane		isol	

**Observations**

Chercher  
Sélectionner  
Trier  
Tout voir  
Créer  
Supprimer  
-> glossaires  
Import  
sophy  
Export  
Carte  
Quitter

Powerful research engine!

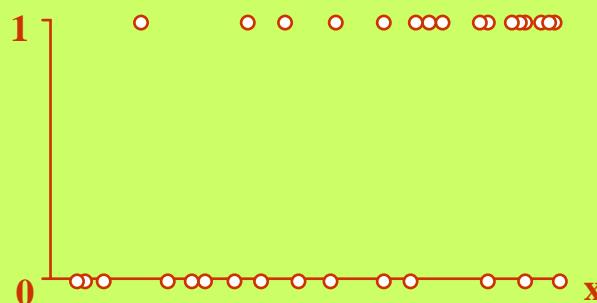
Gégout J.-C., Ch. Coudun, G. Bailly and B. Jabiol (2005): EcoPlant: A forest site database linking floristic data with soil and climate variables. *Journal of Vegetation Science*, 16, 257-260.

## 2. Main applications of EcoPlant

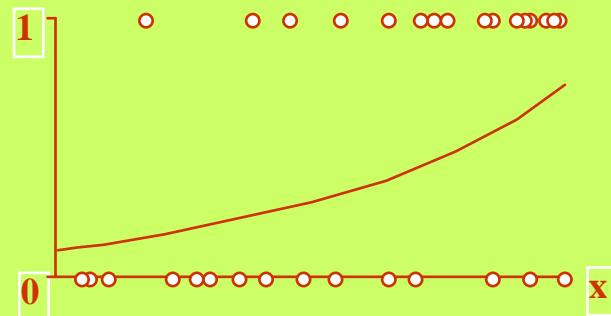
## **2.1. Ecological indicator values**

# Ecological response curves along one gradient

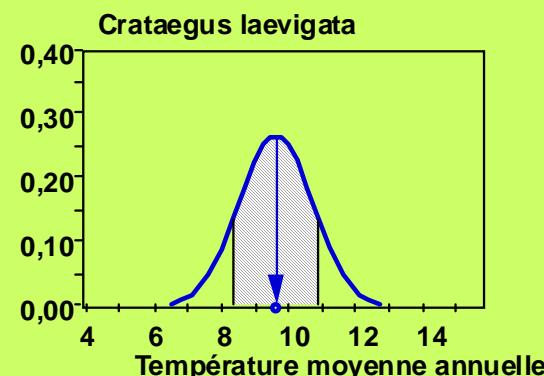
1 - Repartition of observed **presence** (1) and **absence** (0) along an ecological factor (e.g.  $x = \text{pH}$ )



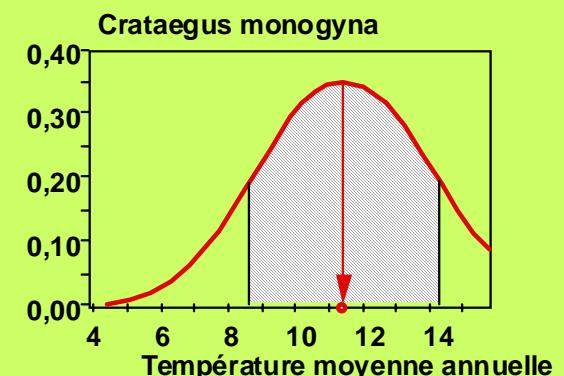
2 - Modelling of species response curve with **logistic regression**



3. Definition of **species indicator values**: optimum and amplitude



*Crataegus laevigata*  
Optimum : 9,6 °C  
Amplitude : 3,2 °C

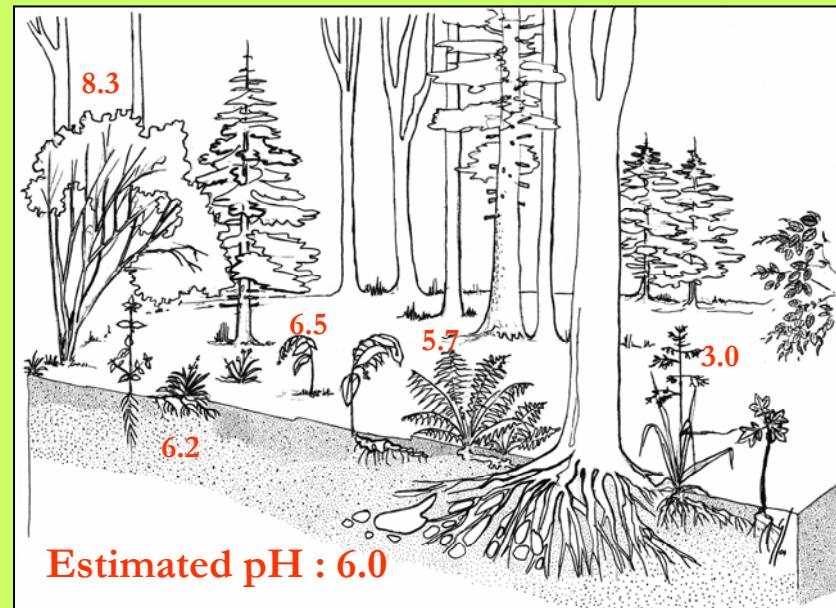
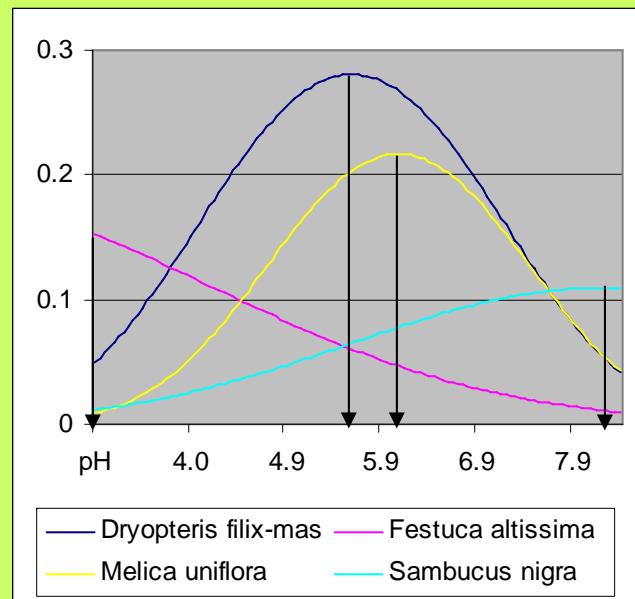


*Crataegus monogyna*  
Optimum : 11,5 °C  
Amplitude : 5,5 °C

# Species ecological indicator values based on real measurements

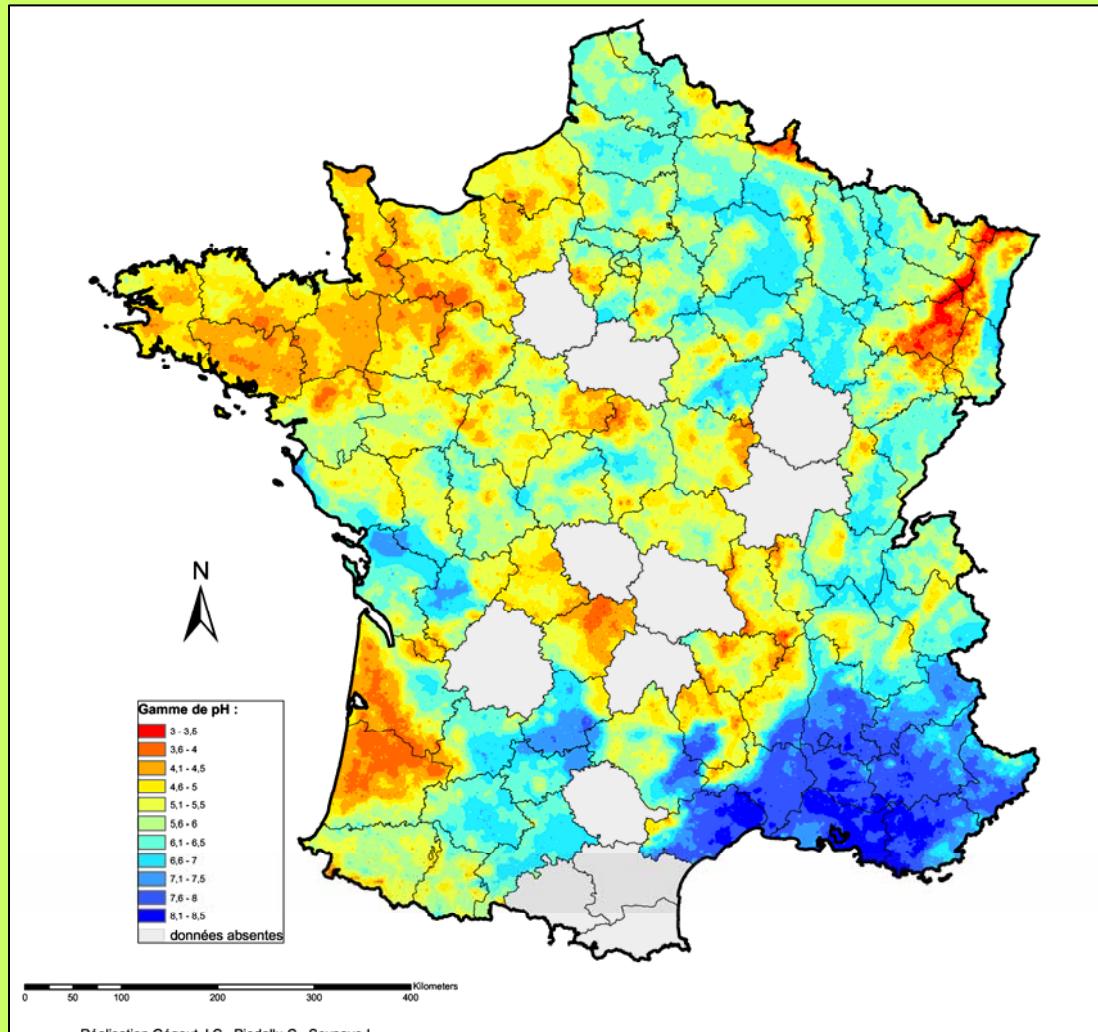
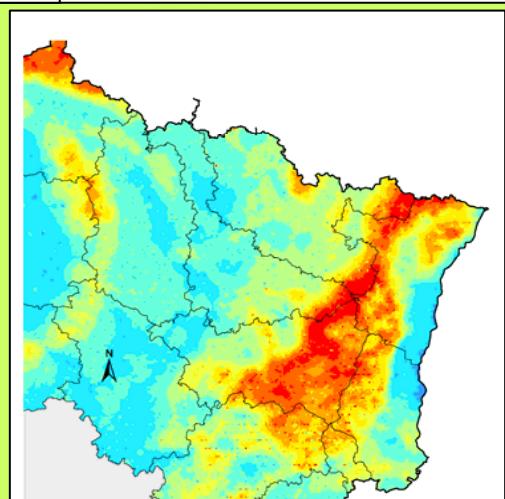
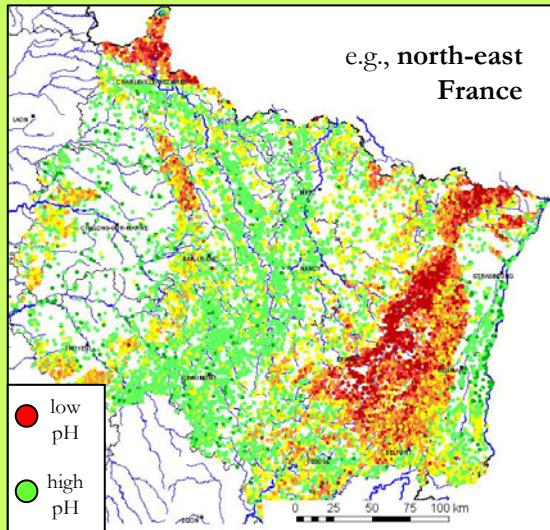
Selection of environmental factors having a « **direct** » physiological influence on plant growth and survival

Factor	Measured variable	Ellenberg/Landolt
Acidity	pH, S/T	R
Nitrogen	C/N	N
Temperature	Mean annual T	T
Thermal stress	Mean January T	K
Hydrologic stress	De Marton index	F

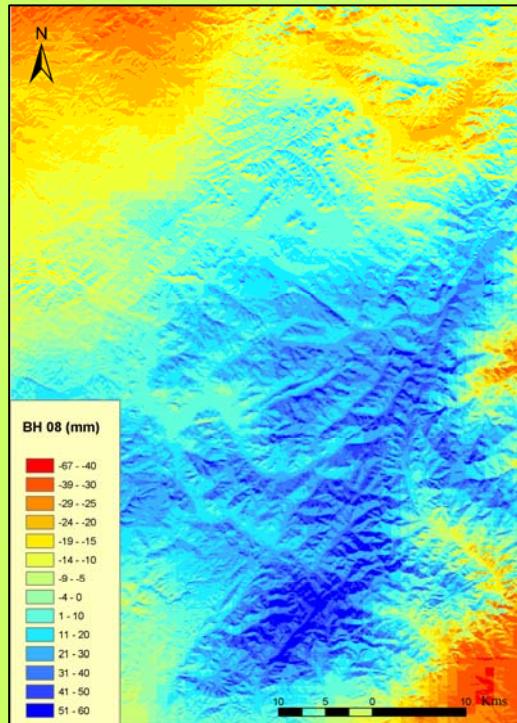
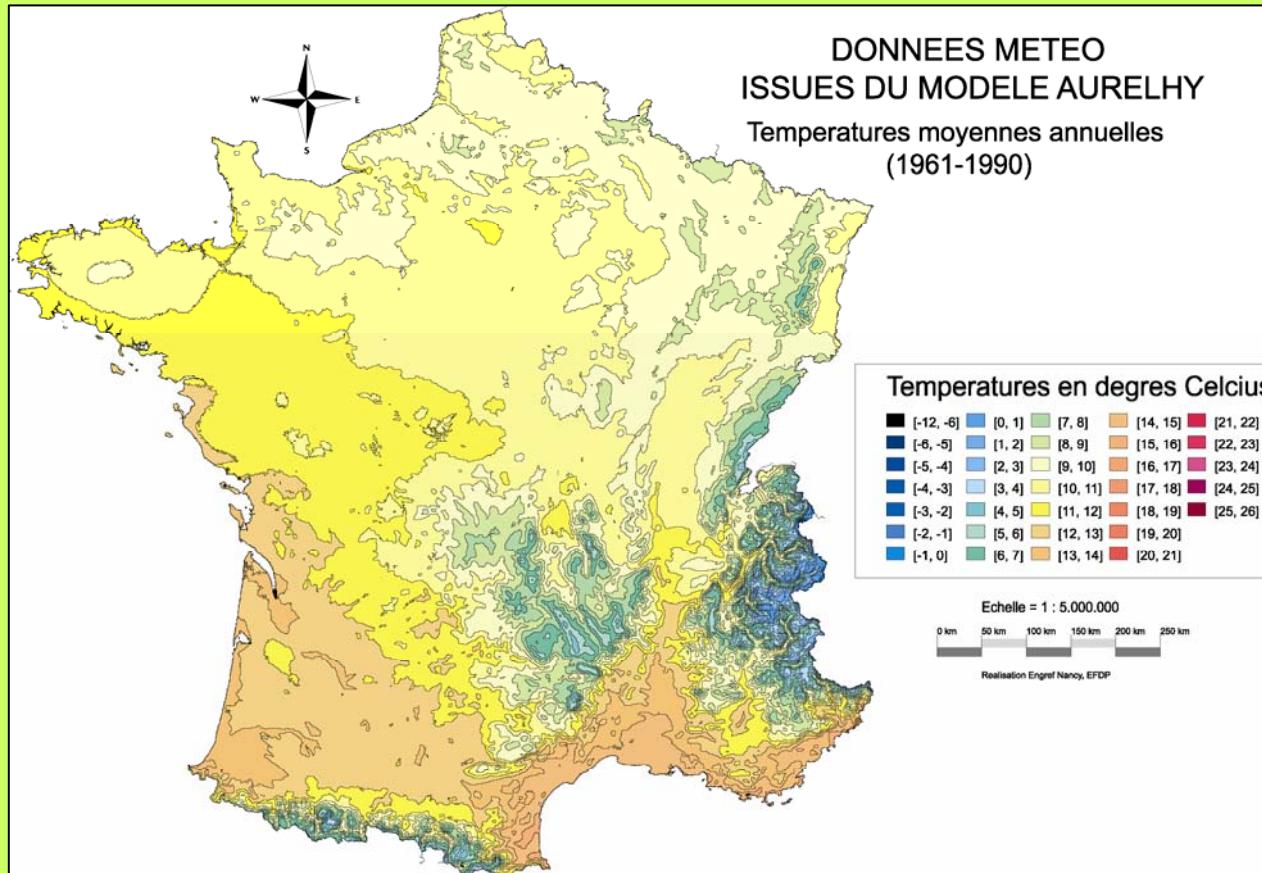


# Edaphic maps: e.g. soil pH

(spatial interpolation of bio-indicated values, from EcoPlant)



# Climatic maps from meteorological data and DEM



Water balance ( $P - PET_{Turec}$ )  
in the Vosges Mountains

## **2.2. Ecological niche determination (*Acer campestre*)**

# Predicting the distribution of *Acer campestre* (L.) in French forests with climatic and edaphic factors



3,286 relevés

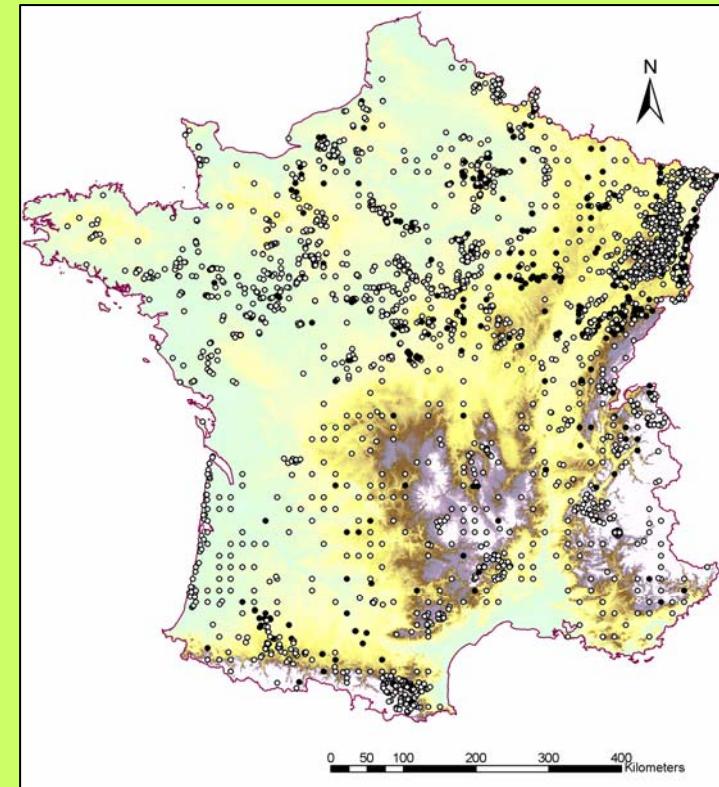
460 relevés with  
presence of *Acer*  
*campestre* (**black points**)

**156 climatic variables**

(T, P, radiation, PET, AET, WB...)

**6 edaphic variables**

(pH, C/N, S/T, Ca, Mg, K)



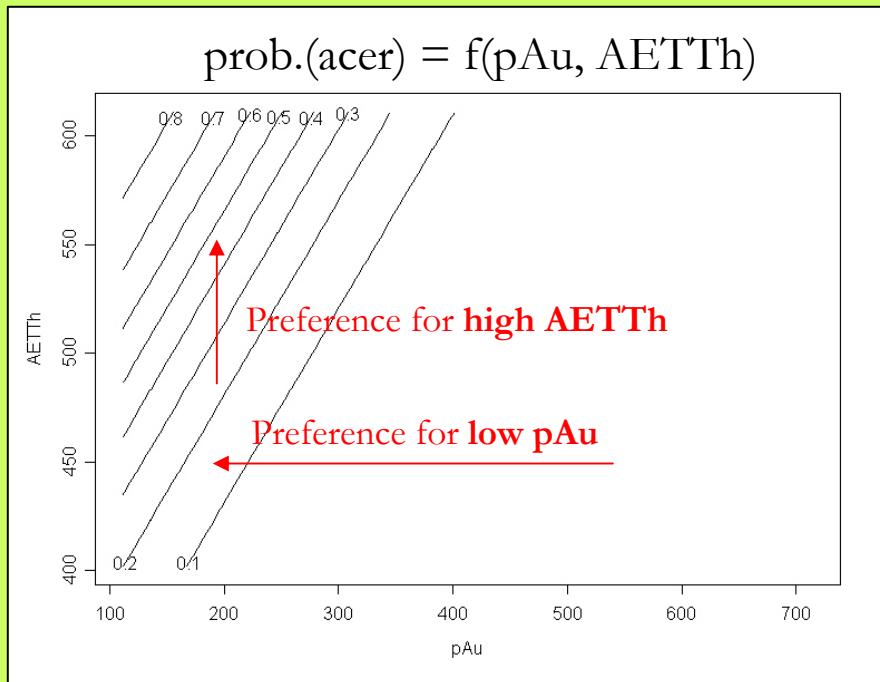
**Coudun, Ch., J.-C. Gégout, C. Piedallu and J.-C. Rameau (in press):** Soil nutritional factors improve plant species distribution models: an illustration with *Acer campestre* (L.) in France. *Journal of Biogeography*.

# Ecological response of *Acer campestre*

(forward stepwise logistic regression)

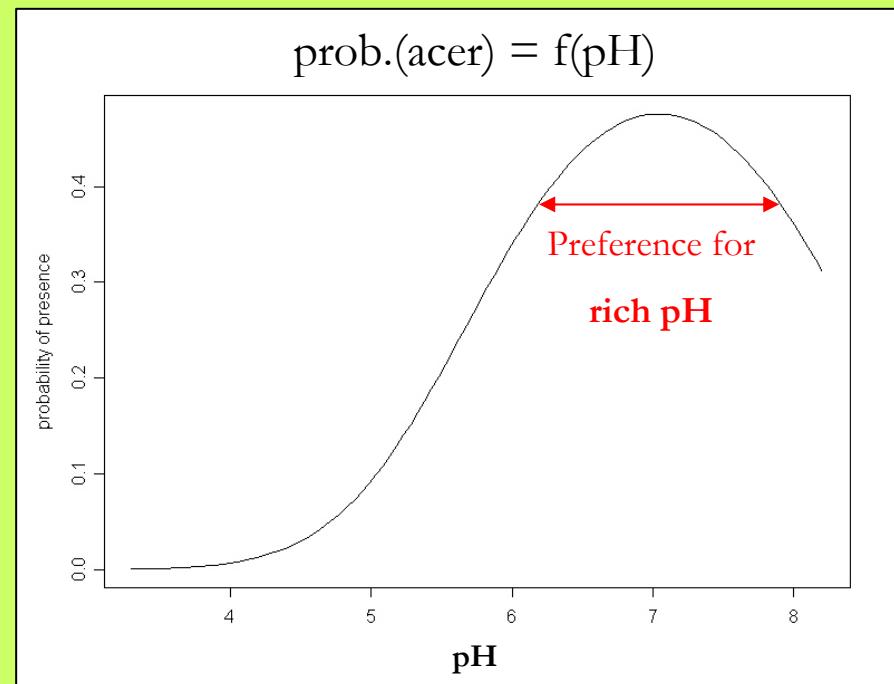
## I. Climatic model only

1. Autumn precipitation (pAu)
2. Annual actual evapotranspiration (AET<sup>r</sup>Th)

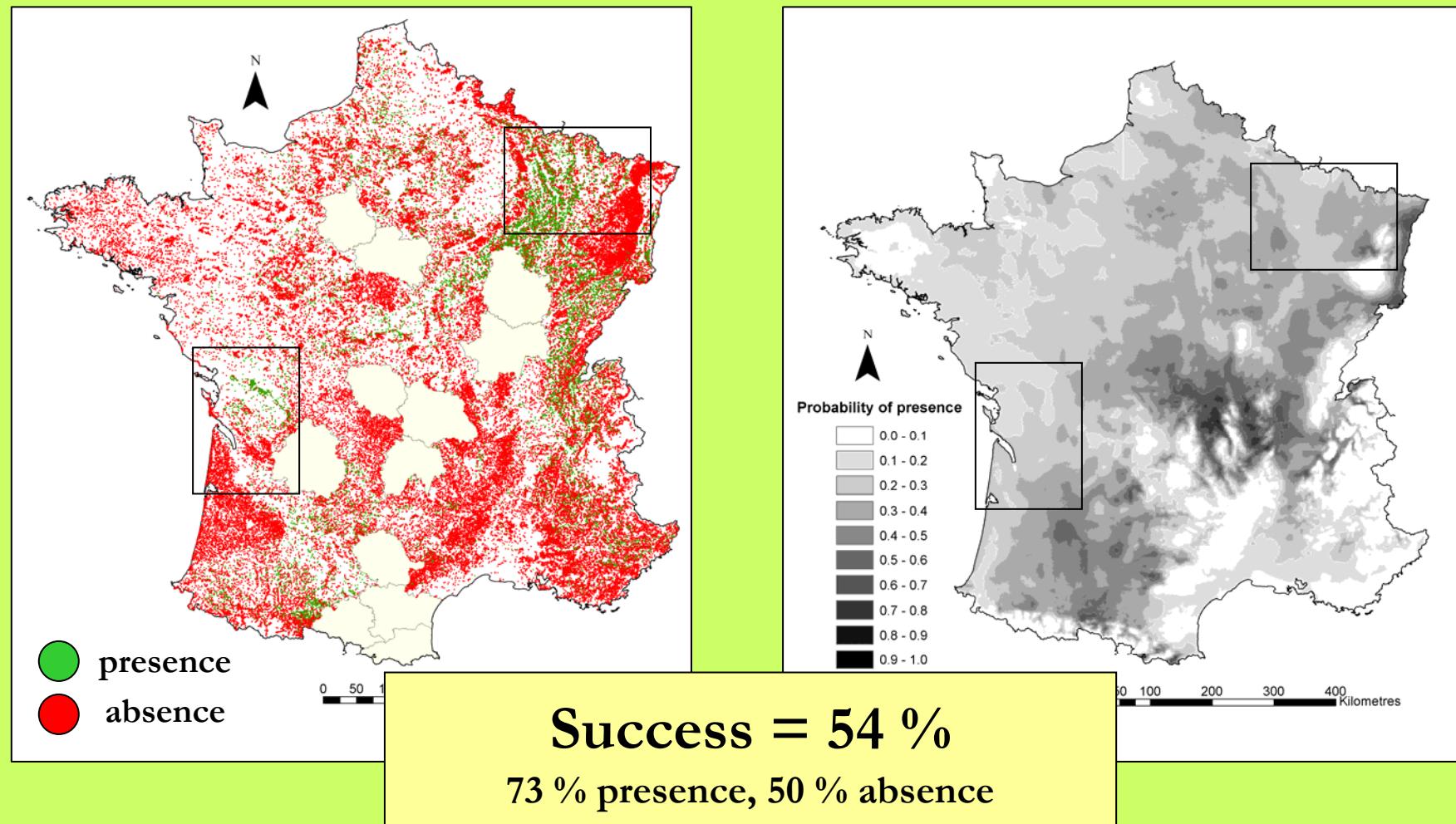


## II. Climatic and edaphic model

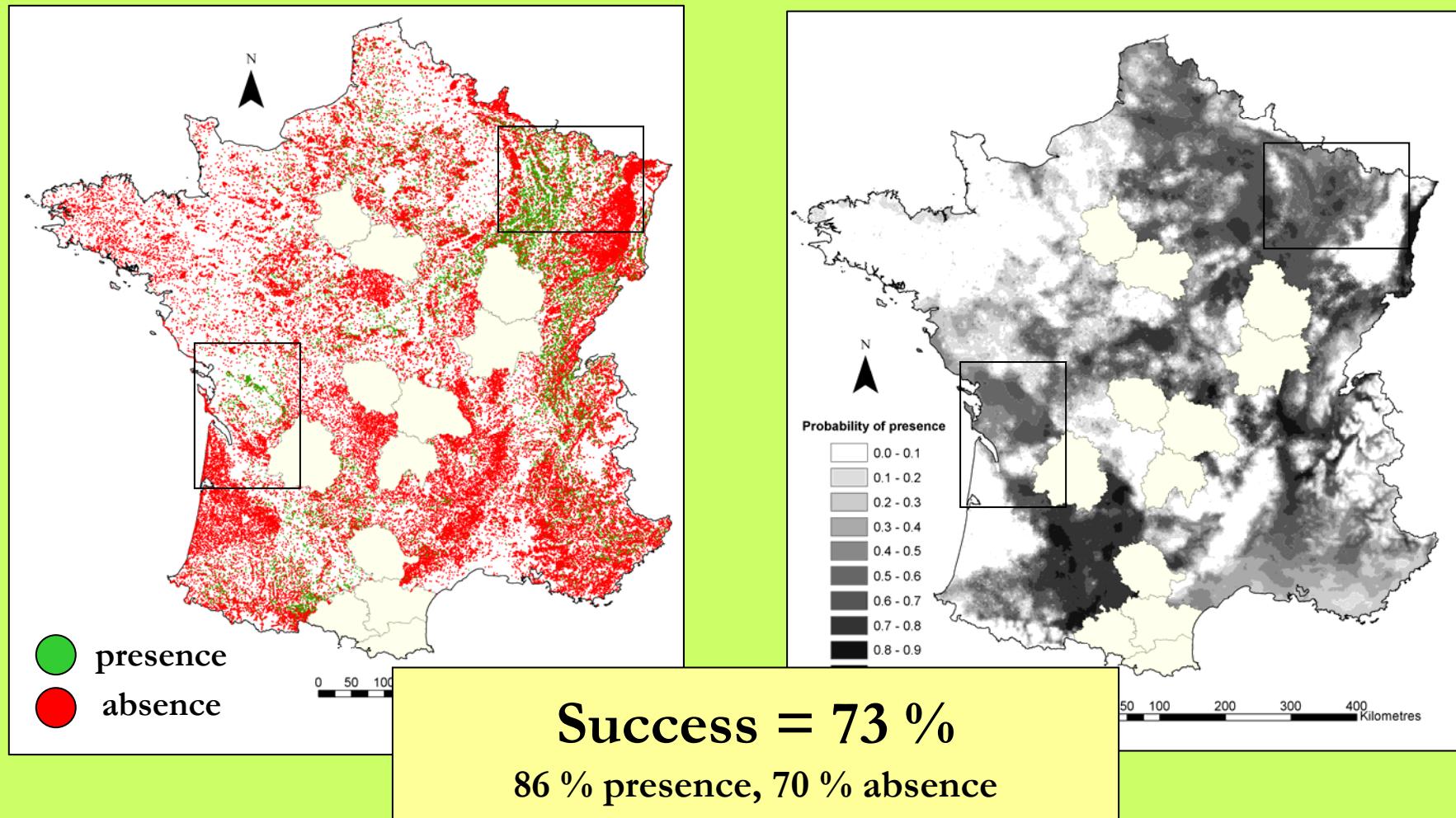
1. soil pH (pH)
2. Autumn precipitation (pAu)
3. Annual actual evapotranspiration (AET<sup>r</sup>Th)



# Map 1. Predicting the distribution of *Acer campestre* with climatic factors only (pAu + AETTh)



## Map 2. Predicting the distribution of *Acer campestre* with climatic and edaphic factors ( $pH + pAu + AETTh$ )



## **2.2. Productivity of forest trees (*Fagus sylvatica*)**

# Productivity of *Fagus sylvatica* in French forests

IFN: 97 281 relevés

Calibration points:

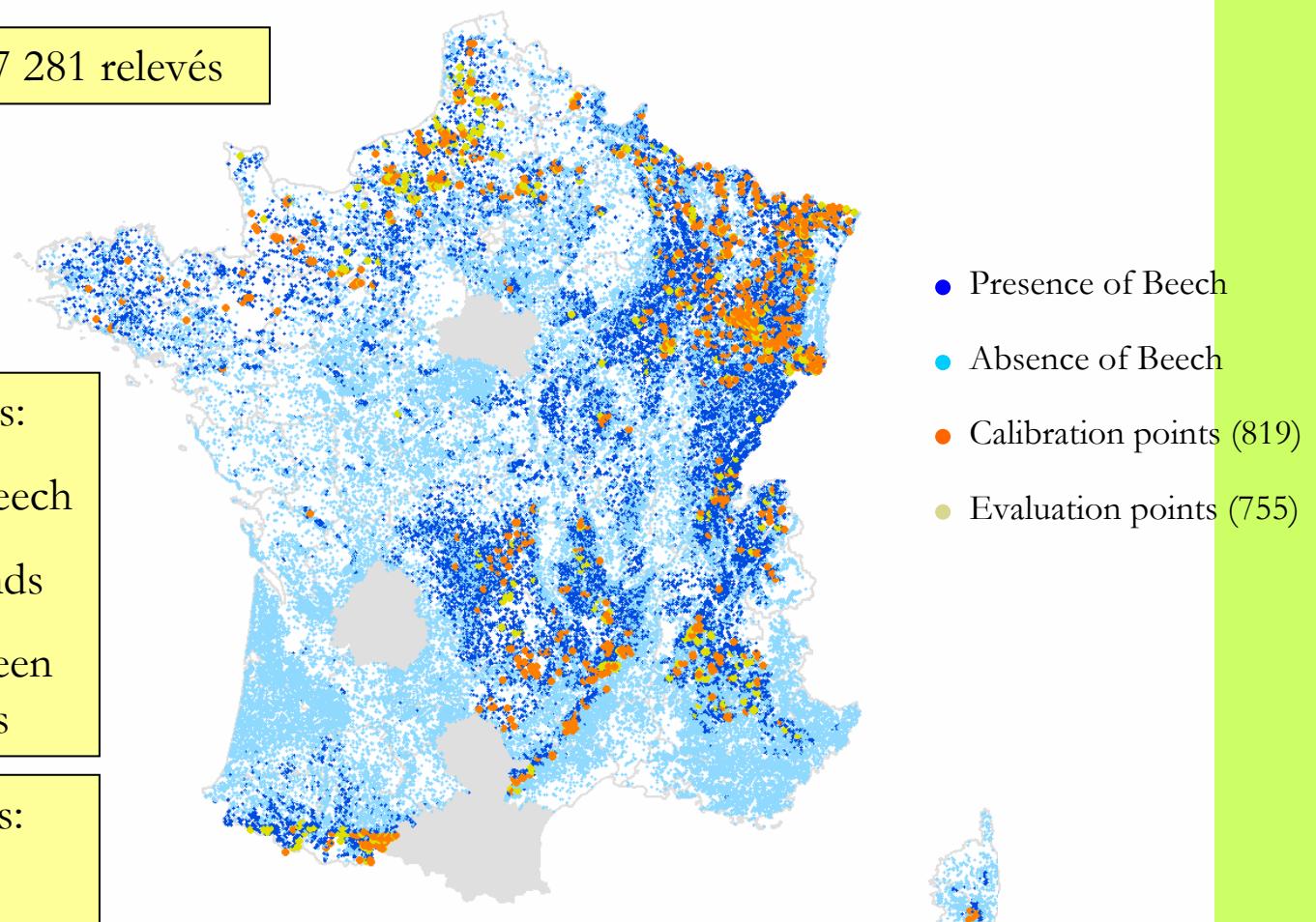
- (a) dominated by Beech
- (b) even-aged stands
- (c) stand age between 70 and 100 years

Evaluation points:

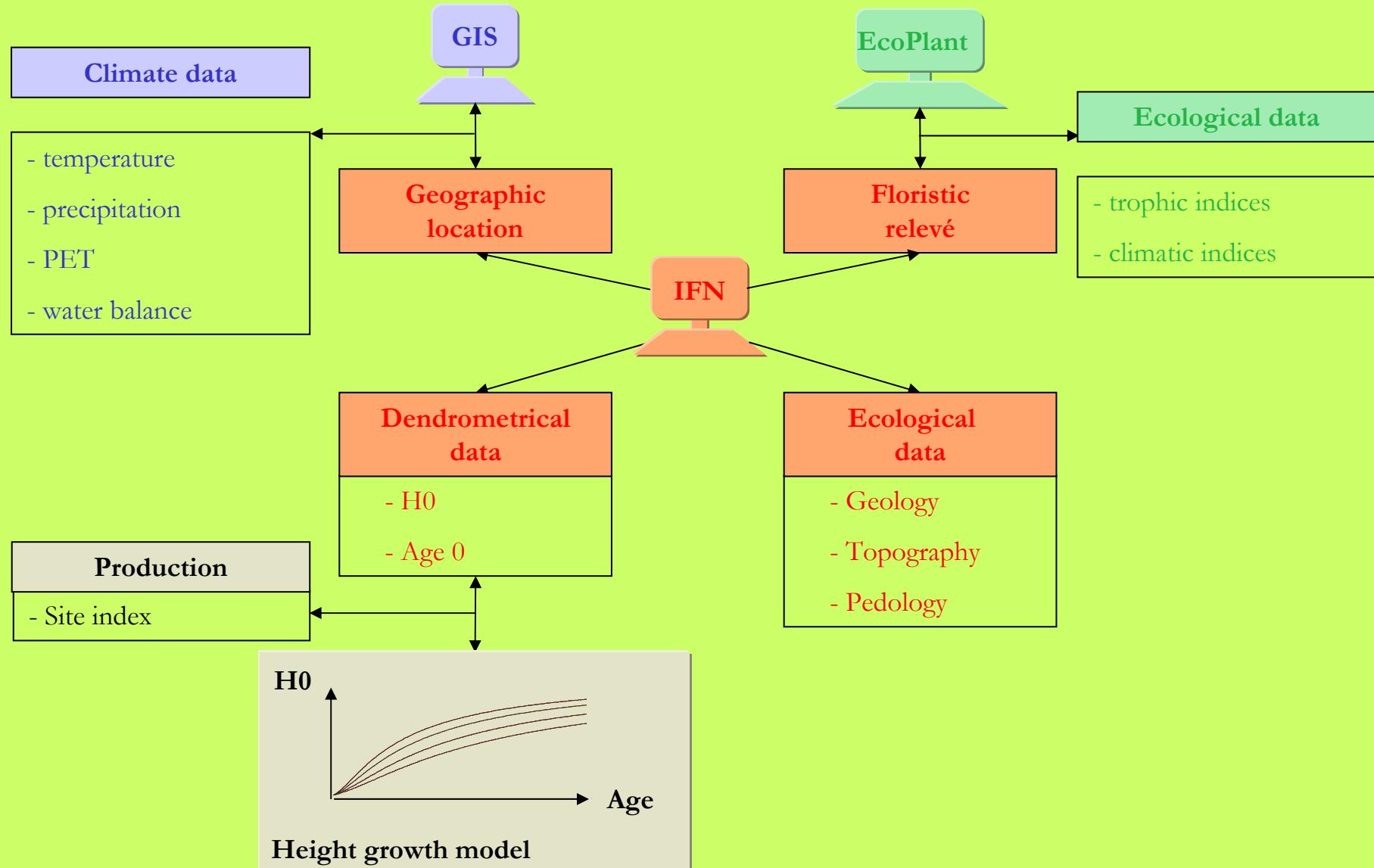
same criteria

Measure of productivity: site index (dominant height - in metres - at reference age 100 yr)

Beech in France: SI = 10 to 42 m at 100 years



# Beech productivity: coupling databases...

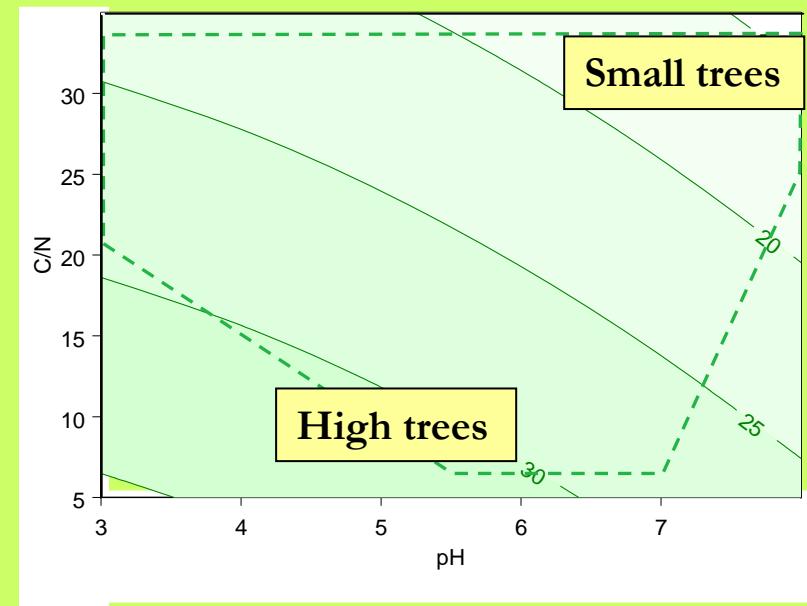
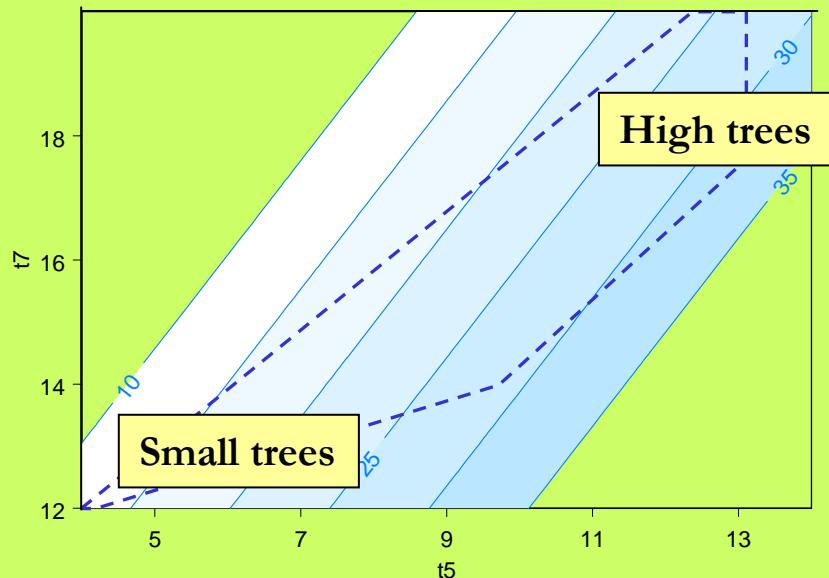


# Beech productivity: resulting ecological model

7 environmental  
variables

$$SI = 38.4 + 3.9*t5 - 2.8*t7 - 0.13*t1^2 - 0.57 \cdot 10^{-4}*p12^2 + 0.35*prof - 0.37*C/N - 0.16*pH^2$$

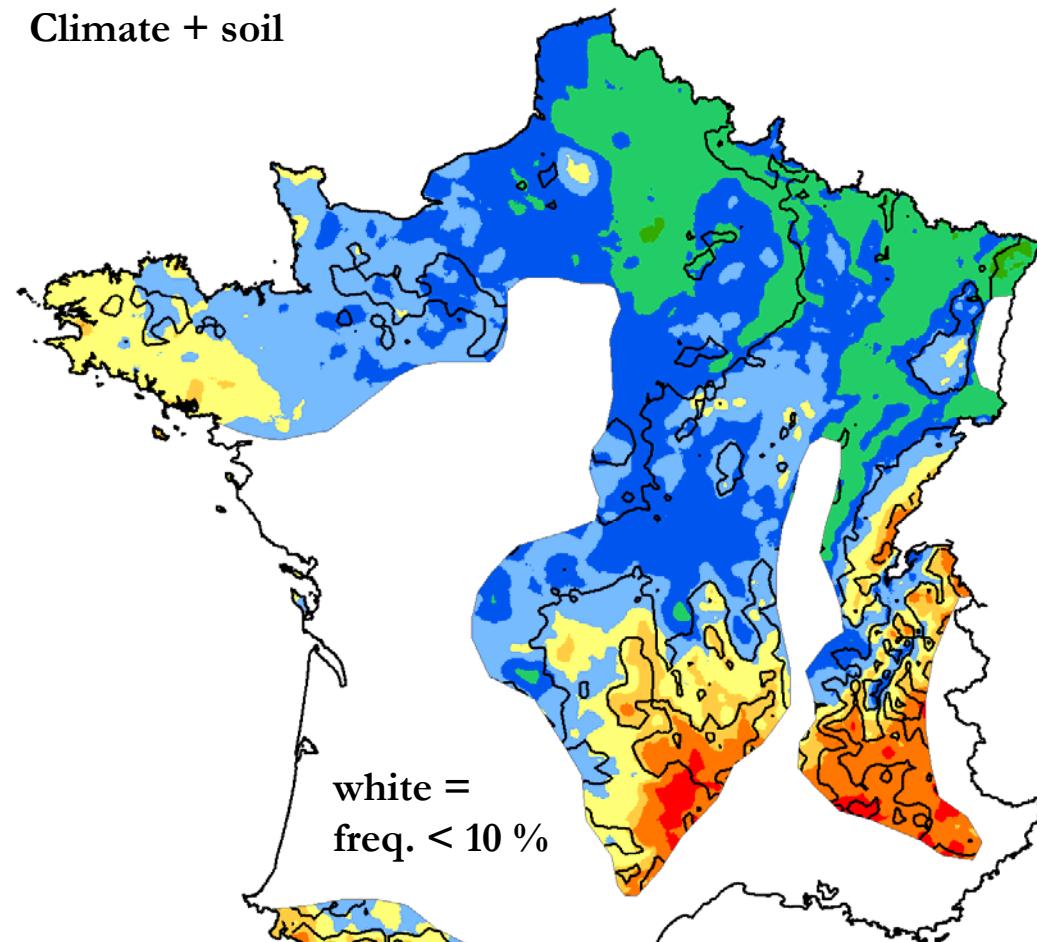
- Climate - GIS
- IFN
- EcoPlant VI



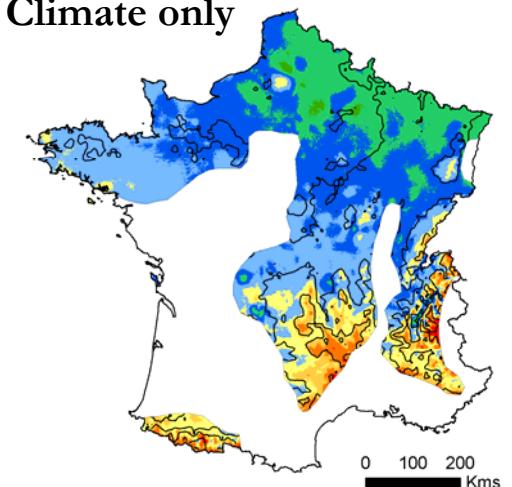
$R^2 = 0.59$ ;  $RMSE = 3.8$  m

# Beech productivity: prediction maps

Climate + soil



Climate only



Seynave, I., J.-C. Gégout, J.-C. Hervé and J.-F. Dhôte (in review): How do climate and soil control the spatial distribution of *Fagus sylvatica* productivity? *Global Ecology & Biogeography*.

### **3. Perspectives**

# Perspectives for EcoPlant

Integration of phytoecological relevés contained in **PhD dissertations**

Realisation of **new relevés** and **collaborations** to get a better knowledge in poorly represented regions

Integration of **open environments** into EcoPlant to investigate the behaviour of **all species** of French flora

**Geographic extension** of EcoPlant at the European scale to study the ecological of certains species in the **totality** of their distribution range

**Coupling** of EcoPlant with species traits databases (e.g. LEDA)

**Translation** of EcoPlant into English (software, dictionary of data, technical reports, etc.).

## Other research perspectives

Characterisation of **geographical variation** of species ecological niche (e.g. two regions in Coudun & Gégout 2005)

Use of EcoPlant edaphic indicator values to produce fine-grain **maps** of France of **mineral nutrition conditions**

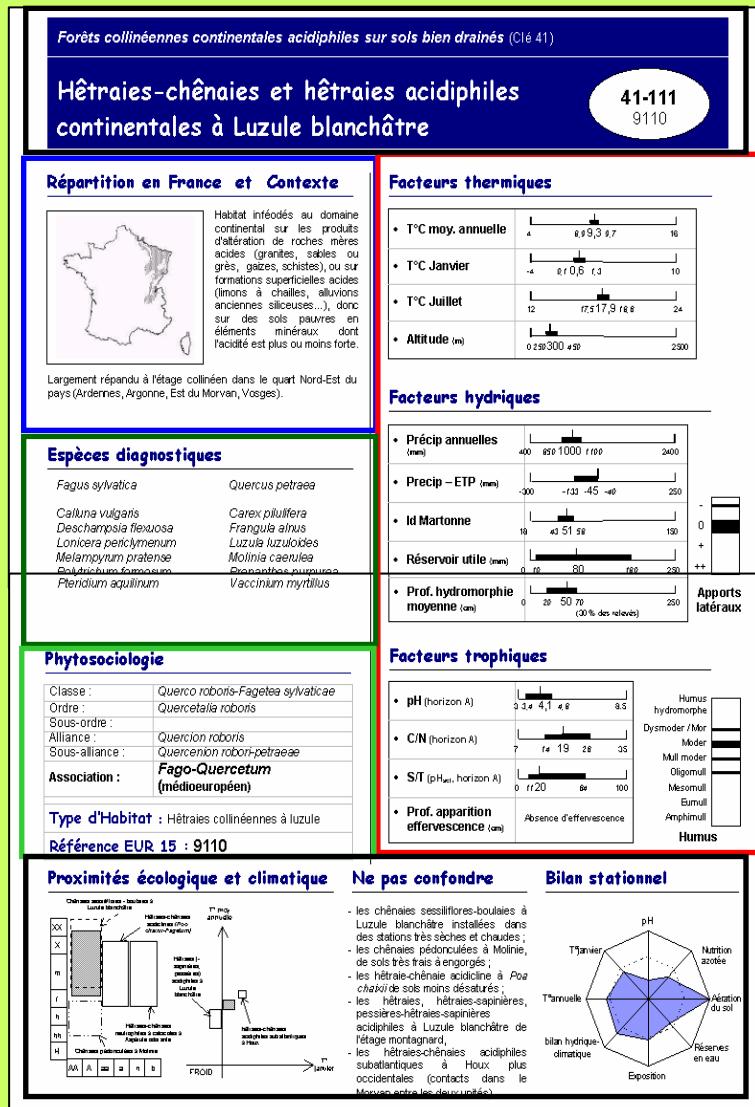
Use of bio-indicated trophic variables to investigate further the **productivity** of forest trees (e.g. already *Abies alba*, *Picea abies*, *Fagus sylvatica*)

**Classification and ecology** of French forest ecosystems (all relevés in north-east France are already classified), especially those with particular **patrimonial** or **conservation** interest

Quantitative characterisation of response of forest plant species/communities to **global change**

**Many thanks/Vielen Dank !**

# Use of EcoPlant to characterise forest habitats



For each habitat

+ floristic composition within habitat

Habitat distribution

Ecology

Diagnostic species

Frequency index

Diagnostic index

Relative abundance

Neutroclines	
<i>Hedera helix</i>	86 1,9
<i>Carpinus betulus</i>	83 2,4
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	62 1,1
<i>Viola reichenbachiana</i>	54 2,2
<i>Rosa arvensis</i>	49 2,1
<i>Polygonatum multiflorum</i>	44 1,6
<i>Carex sylvatica</i>	43 1,2
<i>Crataegus laevigata</i>	40 1,6
<i>Erythronium sibiricum</i>	40 1,3
<i>Lamium galeobdolon</i>	40 1,1
<i>Vicia sepium</i>	40 2,8
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	38 2,0
<i>Prunus avium</i>	33 1,8

Summary diagrams