

Dancing on the Head of a Pin: Unraveling Nature One Mite at a Time

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Mites are among the smallest of terrestrial animals and on average so small as to appear insignificant to ecosystem function. Yet we know from agriculture, animal husbandry, and human health that mites can cause consequences that are far in excess of their physical size. Here I consider the roles of mites in a single stratum of two ecosystems, the rainforest phyloplane and the boreal forest organic soil, and show how even esoteric research on insignificant mites can yield results that are positive for human welfare.

