The University of Hong Kong
School of Biological Sciences

Qualifying Seminar

Impact of Drought and Logging on Tropical Rainforest Plants and Insects and the Role of Termites in Mitigating it

Date: 28 March 2024

Time: 10:30 am

Venue: KBSB 3N-01

About the speaker:

Yuen Nok Lam (Chloe) is a PhD student in Dr Louise Ashton's lab. Her research focuses on the impact of drought and logging on tree seedling and insect community performance and ecosystem functions in tropical rainforests, and the role of termites in mitigating them.

Abstract:

Tropical forests face an increasing frequency and intensity of drought and logging pressure. These threats have a synergistic effect on organisms by drying and warming the understory. In primary forests, termites as ecosystem engineers may mitigate drought impact by increasing soil nutrient heterogeneity and moisture, however, they are sensitive to land-use change and whether these species could provide the same ecosystem services is unclear.

My PhD research aims to quantify the impact of drought and logging and the role of termites on a range of parameters: seedling growth and their thermoregulation performance, insect community composition, functional diversity shift of termites, and soil respiration and decomposition. My work will provide insights into the future resilience of ecosystem services in Bornean tropical rainforests, one of the most biodiverse hotspots in the world.