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**Changing climate, changing sex: The impact of physical stress on sex determination in striped maples**

Gender in plants is expressed via the flowers and can be determined in a variety of ways. Most plants have hermaphroditic flowers with both stamens and ovaries; in a minority of trees the flowers of different sexes are separated within or among trees. In rare cases, flower gender is flexible and may be influenced by environmental factors. One such example of labile sex determination occurs in striped maples, Acer pensylvanicum (Sapindaceae). These small hardwood trees can switch sex expression throughout their lifetimes, but populations are usually highly male skewed. Preliminary data suggests that physical damage is an important factor in gender determination for these trees, while other types of environmental stress may also play a role. Given the projected climatic instability and the rising frequency of storms, the resulting stress may increase the relative frequency of females within populations. This may consequently improve seed set, recruitment, and persistence of Acer pensylvanicum. Therefore, increased storm damage may impact not only the demographics of striped maple populations but also the composition and demographics of eastern hardwood forests.