



# Meet the Scientist!



A plant ecologist studies plants and how they function on the landscape.

## Dr. Qinfeng Guo

Research Ecologist  
Ph.D., University of New Mexico  
USDA Forest Service scientist



<http://www.naturalinquirer.org>

<http://www.scienceinvestigator.org>

### Important Scientist Characteristics

- ★ Curiosity
- ★ Broad training and background
- ★ Strong interests in how nature works

**Example of a simple research question I have tried to answer:** Why are some introduced species invasive and others are not? Why are some habitats more vulnerable to species invasions than others?

**Technology or equipment used in research:**  
I use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to locate and map the distribution of invasive species. I also use GIS to map the projected spread and distribution of many invasive species in the future using various climate change models.

### Most Exciting Discovery

I recently completed a study reporting the richness and distribution of invasive and other documented hybrid plants in the United States. The results show that, similar to the factors controlling the richness and distribution of exotic species (but not natives), human disturbances also create novel niches for the newly formed hybrids to establish and persist. This is the first such report at the national level for hybrid plants in the US.

### When did you know you wanted to be a scientist?

Since high school when I learned about some big names in science and their stories.