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Interactive comment on “Rainfall patterns after fire differentially affect the recruitment of three Mediterranean shrubs” by J. M. Moreno et al.

Anonymous Referee #3

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This paper is a relevant contribution to the understanding of the interaction of disturbance events with climate variations, particularly rainfall. Fieldwork studies on the interactions between different factors are complex and extremely useful to provide sound scientific basis for modeling the effects of climate change, and surely the interaction of rainfall patterns and fire disturbance regime is a critical topic for the Mediterranean areas. The paper should therefore be presented in Biogeosciences. The main issue concerning the paper is the lack of data relative to the community composition before the fire events, both in the sampled plots and in a buffer area around them. Indeed species abundances within and around the plots are likely to strongly affect the relative abundances of the emerging seedlings. If data on soil seed bank were not available, however data on species abundances in the plots and in a buffer area around them could have been used to analyze the number of seedlings of the con-

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sidered species, partly controlling for seeds availability. Another issue that may have been solved through the sampling of the vegetation before fires is the role of the other species occurring in the shrubland, namely *Erica arborea* and *Phyllirea angustifolia*. In fact even if their emergence was nil, as stated at the beginning of the materials and methods section, these species are resprouters and are provided with well-developed root systems. Within the sampled quadrats of 50x50cm the occurrence of individuals of these species could have caused hypogeal competition especially affecting the data relative to recruitment. I suggest to the authors to describe in detail the characteristics of the vegetation before the fires and to mention this information also in the discussion. Other comments: Figure 6 and 7 are wrongly cited within the text In the discussion the authors state that fall-winter rainfall have the potential to change plant demography and community composition, while summer drought may not be as critical as usually assumed. However the authors related seedling emergence only with fall-winter rainfall and no relations are shown concerning summer rainfall. I would avoid this statement or support it quoting data not shown if this statement derives from authors' explorative analyses. I agree with Referee #2 that figures showing all plots (not average values) would be more informative for the reader. I found difficult to understand the meaning of year 1-2-3-4, in relation to rainfall patterns and species sampling: are the authors considering a year starting in January or in the summer, this doubt raises especially from figure 1, this should be stated in the materials and methods section.

Interactive comment on Biogeosciences Discuss., 8, 5761, 2011.

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