

# Key plant species may be important for supporting wildflower pollinators

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Increased agricultural production has likely led to loss, fragmentation, and degradation of flower-rich habitats for pollinators. To counteract these negative effects of modern agricultural practices, efforts to maintain and restore diverse plants in agricultural landscapes—called agri-environmental schemes (AES)—have been implemented in numerous European countries.

A new study in *Insect Conservation and Diversity* found that flower mixtures planted within AES may not need to be highly diverse to support pollinators in agricultural landscapes.

For the study, investigators tested four recommended seed mixtures for their attractiveness to wild bees and hoverflies in AES. Of 94 available plant species, 14 key plant species were crucial for the whole flower-visiting bee and hoverfly community.

The authors note that a selection of efficient key plant species, targeted at different pollinator groups throughout the flowering season, seems a promising tool for future development.

"Since wildflowers typical to agricultural habitats were among the most effective plant species, our study shows that the protection of [pollinators](#) will be most successful when AES are directed at advancing the sustainable use of arable landscapes," said Daniela Warzecha, lead author of the study.

**More information:** Daniela Warzecha et al, Attractiveness of wildflower mixtures for wild bees and hoverflies depends on some key plant species, *Insect Conservation and Diversity* (2017). [DOI: 10.1111/icad.12264](https://doi.org/10.1111/icad.12264)

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