

# working title Compatibility system and stigma size are the main predictors of heterospecific pollen effect

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Pollinator sharing can have negative consequences for plant fitness with the arrival of foreign pollen. However, the costs of heterospecific pollen are not yet well understood. We conducted a glasshouse experiment to understand how phylogenetic relatedness and plant traits mediate the impacts of heterospecific pollen transfer. We conducted 1800 crosses by experimentally transferring pollen (50% and 100% ratio) with reciprocal crosses between 10 species belonging to three different families: Brassicaceae, Solanaceae and Convolvulaceae. Seed set was used as proxy of plant fitness. We found that for 65% of the treatments with 50% mix reduced seed set. Moreover, the reduction in seed set was dependent on the degree of relatedness and reproductive traits of the pollen recipient and not the pollen donor. Our results show that certain traits, particularly compatibility system, are critical in understanding the costs of heterospecific pollen.

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**Keywords:** heterospecific pollen, plant reproduction, fitness, interspecific competition, phylogenetic distance.

## INTRODUCTION

In most ecosystems, plant species normally coexist and share their floral visitors with other species Waser et al. (1996). From the plants' perspective, pollinator sharing can be positive for some plants Carvalheiro et al. (2014) or negative for others Pauw (2013), depending on the facilitation gradient. An increasing number of visits often correlates with higher chances of fertilization Engel and Irwin (2003). However this is not always the case, among these possible flower visitors there are also nectar robbers and pollen thieves Inouye (1980); Magrach et al. (2017). Receiving both sufficient quantity and quality deposited on the stigma is thus highly relevant to the pollination success of the plant Aizen and Harder (2007).

34 By visiting many plant species, many pollinators are responsible for conspecific pollen loss and the  
35 transport of foreign pollen, both of which can have important detrimental effects on species fitness  
36 Morales and Traveset (2008); Ashman and Arceo-Gómez (2013); Arceo-Gómez and Ashman (2016).  
37 Foreign pollen arrival can play an important role in plant species fitness but outcomes are variable and  
38 appear to be context dependent as there is not always a decrease in fitness Morales and Traveset (2008).  
39 Some of this variation is likely due to the enormous variability of foreign pollen transferred across  
40 systems ranging from 0 to 75 percent. However, most studies report ranges of heterospecific pollen  
41 between 0 and 20 percent of the total pollen load Bartomeus et al. (2008) Montgomery and Rathcke  
42 (2012); Ashman and Arceo-Gómez (2013); Fang and Huang (2013), yet even these relatively low  
43 amounts of heterospecific pollen transferred can decrease fitness greatly Thomson et al. (1982). While  
44 we now have some understanding of the impacts of heterospecific pollen quantity, we have less  
45 understanding of other factors that could be driving the variation in impacts upon fitness. Ashman and  
46 Arceo-Gómez (2013) postulated the first predictive framework that identifies a need to understand how  
47 plant traits might mediate heterospecific pollen effect, whereby mating system and pollen size were  
48 predicted to potentially mediate the impact of foreign pollen transfer on plant fitness. This concept is  
49 supported by specific case studies, such as Tong and Huang (2016) that demonstrate an asymmetrical  
50 effect in 6 species of *Pedicularis* whereby the pollen of long styled species was able to grow the full  
51 length of the style on short styled species but not vice versa. While this suggests that the impacts of  
52 heterospecific pollen may differ among pollen donor and recipient, few studies have been conducted to  
53 ascertain whether this pattern is in fact a general trend or to identify the extent to which other plant  
54 traits are critical to heterospecific pollen impacts.

55 Plant traits are crucial to understand heterospecific pollen effect but the multifactorial nature of the  
56 traits that are involve in the pollen-pistil interaction make difficult to unravel what are the main traits  
57 in driving the effect. These traits can be seen from a male perspective of both donor and recipient  
58 where pollen size, pollen aperture number and pollen allelopathy are key components to understand the  
59 outcome of foreign pollen arrival Murphy and Aarssen (1995); Ashman and Arceo-Gómez (2013). In  
60 Ashman and Arceo-Gómez (2013) small pollen is predicted to cause a greater fitness decrease, although  
61 this can be true there are also other possibilities to consider which can obscure a predictive framework  
62 like big pollen can clogg small stigmas with fewer pollen grains, bigger stigmas are less likely to be

63 clogged by small pollen grains and bigger pollen can outcompete smaller pollen grains due to faster  
64 pollen tube growth rate Williams and Rouse (1990). Moreover, to understand the different mechanical  
65 or chemical effects of pollen also the female traits of the pollen recipient have to be considered, from  
66 the literature these main traits are: stigma size, style length, number of ovules, incompatibility system  
67 and also a structural trait such as flower morphology Montgomery and Rathcke (2012); Ashman and  
68 Arceo-Gómez (2013); Tong and Huang (2016). For example, greater stigmatic area is positively  
69 correlated with greater heterospecific pollen deposition Montgomery and Rathcke (2012) and therefore  
70 possibly with an increase in negative effect. For species that are self-incompatible the barriers towards  
71 heterospecific pollen are stronger than self-compatible species Ashman and Arceo-Gómez (2013).  
72 Nonetheless, an effect of foreign pollen is a bit obscured by the variability within species, however  
73 species that are strong selfers or strong outcrossers have less variability in mating systems and  
74 predictions of effect could be more realistic (see figure 1 from Whitehead et al. (2018)). Although past  
75 research has progress in the understanding of what traits can mediate the effect as we have shown here,  
76 there are multiple traits involved and multiple possible scenarios still to be explored empirically for a  
77 full understanding of the importance of heterospecific pollen effect in nature.

78 For the understanding at what level or intensity the interference of pollen can occur is important to  
79 consider the relatedness of the interacting species. Closely related species are more likely to have  
80 similar traits Letten and Cornwell (2015). The similarity in traits between closely related species can  
81 lead to higher chances of ovule usurpation/abortion Arceo-Gómez and Ashman (2011) and therefore  
82 studies predict and show a greater negative effect of closely related species Ashman and Arceo-Gómez  
83 (2013); Arceo-Gómez and Ashman (2016). Few studies however, have focused on the impacts of  
84 heterospecific pollen on fitness of distantly related species Galen and Gregory (1989); Neiland and  
85 Wilcock (1999). Despite the fact that far related species are also able to decrease species fitness  
86 (REFS). Yet, most insects and most stigmas have been found to carry multiple species of foreign pollen  
87 with little attention to degree of relatedness (Arceo-Gómez and Ashman (2016); Fang and Huang  
88 (2013). Understanding the role of foreign pollen from distantly related species thus deserves greater  
89 attention. The relatedness of foreign pollen gives a first snapshot of where the pollen competition can  
90 occur and therefore could be a proxy of effect. With that said, Arceo-Gómez and Ashman (2016) is the  
91 only work which has proven a greater effect of close related species through a meta-analysis with low

sample sizes and lack of significance. Therefore, there is a need to study the effect of heterospecific pollen of far and close related species at community level beyond single pairwise interactions.

Heterospecific pollen studies in nature have the complexity added of great environmental variability which can lead to confounding interpretations. Moreover, the great diversity of floral structures and small sizes of some of them such as Asteraceae species make tedious or almost impossible the studies of heterospecific pollen on the field. For this reason, we investigated how floral reproductive traits and relatedness mediate the impact of heterospecific by creating an artificial co-flowering community in a glasshouse with 10 species belonging to three different families with different traits. Our study tries to answer the following question: To what extent do (i) floral reproductive traits and (ii) relatedness, mediate the impacts of heterospecific pollen on seed set.

## METHODS

The study was conducted in a glasshouse at University of New England (Armidale, Australia) from November 2017 to March 2018. Rooms were temperature controlled depending on the requirements of the species with day and night temperature differences. The species selected (**Table 1**) belonged to three different families, Solanaceae, Brassicaceae and Convolvulaceae. The criteria of species/family selection was based on close/distant related species (see phylogenetic tree for relatedness fig 1)I would explain more the bauty of our nested dessign to ensure close and far distance simultaneously, heterogeneous traits, low structural flower complexity and fast life cycle. For the purpose of the experiment all the species where considered as pollen recipient and as pollen donor (see interaction matrix, fig 2). Species were watered once or twice per day and fertilized weekly (NPK 23: 3.95: 14).

**Table 1**

Family	Genus	Species
Brassicaceae	Brassica	Brassica rapa
Brassicaceae	Brassica	Brassica oleracea
Brassicaceae	Eruca	Eruca versicaria

Family	Genus	Species
Brassicaceae	Sinapis	Sinapis alba
Convolvulaceae	Ipomoea	Ipomoea aquatica
Convolvulaceae	Ipomoea	Ipomoea purpurea
Solanaceae	Capsicum	Capsicum annuum
Solanaceae	Petunia	Petunia integrifolia
Solanaceae	Solanum	Solanum lycopersicum
Solanaceae	Solanum	Solanum melongena

### 113 Hand-pollination

114 Foreign pollen effect was studied through two different treatments, one with 50% conspecific pollen and  
115 50% heterospecific pollen and a second one with 100% foreign pollen (N=10) this second I don't get,  
116 maybe explain it's utility.. Therefore, 180 different combinations were performed with N=10 per  
117 combination. Seed set was the proxy of effect for all our treatments. Moreover, hand cross pollination  
118 (between individuals of the same species), hand self pollination, apomixis (bagged emasculated flowers)  
119 and natural selfing were tested for each species (N=10). For the treatments with foreign pollen and  
120 hand cross pollination, flowers were emasculated the day prior anthesis and hand pollinated next day  
121 with a toothpick. Hand-pollination was conducted with 3-4 gentle touches on the stigma surface. The  
122 mixes of pollen were realized on an eppendorf based on the pollen counts made with Neubauer chamber  
123 (each anther was counted 4 times for 20 different anthers per species)-IB explain better and give a bit  
124 more of detail. In order to confirm that the treatments applied were 50-50 percent pollen, for each focal  
125 species the total stigmatic load of pollen was counted from one donor of each family (N=3).

### 126 Traits and evolutive distance

127 The traits measured for each species were pollen per anther, number of ovules, stigma width and length  
128 and stigmatic area, style width and length, ovary width and length. Moreover stigma type explain was  
129 tested. Pollen was counted for 20 anthers of each species with 4 replicates per sample with an  
130 hemocytometer. Previously, anthers were squashed on a known solution with the pippete tip and

homogenize with a vortex for 30 seconds. Ovule number was counted with the help of an stereomicroscope and a small grid over a petri dish from 15 randomly selected flowers. The different morphometrical traits were measured with a digital stereomicroscope. Levels of self incompatibility were estimated by dividing the fruit set of hand self pollination by hand cross pollination Lloyd and Schoen (1992).

## Analysis

We used the statistical language R (R Core Team 2018) for all our analyses. Differences of seed set between treatments and hand cross pollination for each species was tested through mixed linear models. For the following analysis we scaled the values of seed production for all the species with mean 0 and sd of 1. To test the effect of heterospecific pollen, we subtracted to the seed set of hand cross pollination the seed set of heterospecific pollen treatments. In order to see correlations between heterospecific pollen effect and traits we performed Mantel test between the matrix of heterospecific pollen effect and the distance matrix of each trait (euclidean distances). Moreover, Mantel test was also conducted between heterospecific pollen effect and the square root of the matrix of phylogenetic distance due to improvement in the statistical power (Letten & Cornwell 2014). all is here, but I would break it by questions and give a bit more detail, to avoid overwhelm the reader We explored also the relations between traits and heterospecific pollen effect through generalized mixed models where the response variable was heterospecific pollen effect, the independent variable the different traits and the random effects the different treatments per species [Here I think you should think if this controls for the non independency of donors and recipients. I think not. Maybe look onto matrix regresions?). Moreover, pairwise evolutive distances were calculated with MEGA7 for two kinds of markers: 1) Internal transcribed spacer (ITS) and 2) ribulose-bisphosphate carboxylase (RBCL). The sequences of interest were downloaded from NCBI GenBank and the phylogenetic tree constructed by maximum likelihood with MEGA7. Make a section on how you contrsucted phylogeny.

I would explain three test. 0) treatment effects with GLM's, 1) Mantels: relative effects, 2) GLM's or matrix models: Absolute effects and explain them in three independent paragraphs including a rationale of why

Phylogenetic signal of traits?

## RESULTS

Results of hand cross pollination, self hand pollination, natural selfing and apomixis are presented in **Table 2**. Heterospecific pollen reduced seed set significantly with the 50-50% heterospecific pollen treatments for 65% of the pairwise interactions  $p < 0.05$ . Across families we found a very similar effect but when species were looked at species level they responded differently even within the same family rephrase and maybe test statistically?, for instance for two species of the Brassicaceae family *Brassica oleracea* and *Eruca versicaria* we found very contrasting effects of foreign pollen where for the first one, all donors reduce seed set significantly and for the second, just two species did out of nine. The 100% foreign pollen treatments barely produced seeds or fruits and just for *Sinapis alba* we did not find significant differences between the hand cross pollination and one treatment with pollen from a confamilial- IB Unclear. Solanaceae species with berry fruit type developed small fruits or even normal fruits in some cases under which treatment. *S. lycopersicum* seems to produce small fruits (35% of the treatments) independently of pollen and pollen donor due to also apomictic treatments did, never normal size. *C. annuum* produced some fruits (9%) of both small and normal size and finally *S. melongena* produced seedless normal fruits with just confamilial pollen (3%), for both species seems that fruit formation was induced by pollen on the stigma because of lack of fruit production with treatments that tested for apomixis. clarify this descriptive statistics part- Also a figure with a summary of the treatments effect would be cool, or at least in the appendices

177 **Table 2.** Percentage of seeds produced per ovule for the ten species used in the experiment. The  
178 treatments presented are hand cross pollination, hand self pollination, natural selfing and apomixis  
179 (emasculated flowers). turn into a figure somehow?

Species	Cross	Self	Natural_selfing	Apomixis
Brassica oleracea	32.06897	0.0000000	0.00000	0
Brassica rapa	44.97041	0.0000000	0.00000	0
Eruca versicaria	23.75000	0.4166667	0.00000	0
Sinapis alba	43.33333	48.3333333	5.00000	15
Ipomoea aquatica	40.00000	30.0000000	20.00000	0
Ipomoea purpurea	31.66667	86.6666667	31.66667	0
Capsicum annuum	100.00000	66.2240664	23.48548	0
Petunia integrifolia	100.00000	24.7727273	0.00000	0
Solanum lycopersicum	90.38043	43.4782609	70.00000	0
Solanum melongena	60.47525	87.9702970	21.56436	0



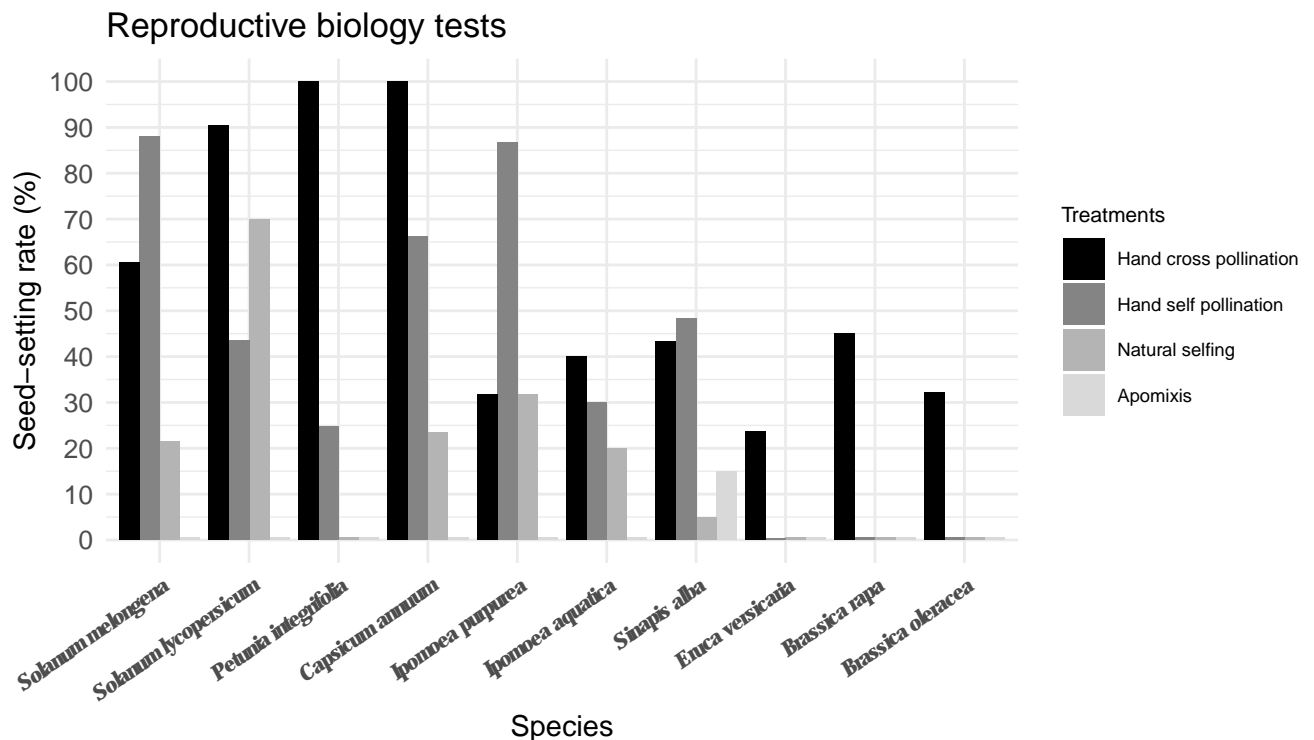


Figure 1: Barplot with the different treatments that provide information of the reproductive biology of the ten species. The y axis is the proportion of ovules converted to seed in percentage. The different treatments (N=10) which are presented in the legend are, hand cross pollination, hand self pollination, natural selfing and apomixis. More information about these treatments can be found in Methods and Appendices.

Mantel test indicates that a possible?? It exists! correlation exist between heterospecific pollen effect and the evolutive relative distances, for ITS and RBCL markers we had r coefficients of 0.29 and 0.25 respectively  $p < 0.05$  think on a figure - maybe using NMDS. Moreover, Mantel test indicates that also a possible?? correlation between stigma width and stigma type exist (stats??). Trait correlations were also explored with GLMM

I have done it at the moment just for Compatibility system Also I have to fix from mixed linear model to GLMM, just realize that

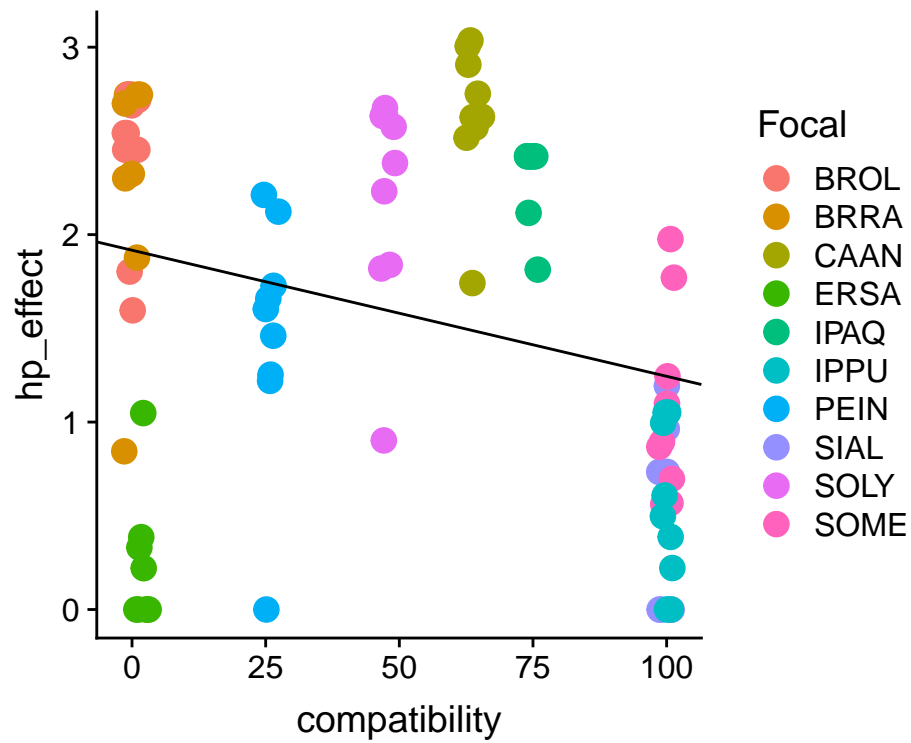


Figure 2: The effect of heterospecific pollen (scaled see set) is represented in function of the compatibility system (self/cross\*100) for the the different species. Each coulored dot represents the interaction of a focal species with a different pollen donor.

187 Compatibility index don't multiply per 100 from Lloyd

## 188 DISCUSSION

### 189 Discussion

190 Herbs vs trees, annual vs perennial... Many flowers vs few flowered species; structural composition on  
191 a system

192 What are the implications of the findings?

193 Ideas about pollen size in heterospecific pollen effect. (still have to develop it more...)

194 Let's classify pollen size in three groups in order to understand the interaction between pollen donor  
195 and recipient: 1) Donor pollen size < Recipient pollen size 2) Donor pollen size = Recipient pollen size  
196 3) Donor pollen size > Recipient pollen size

197 Now I try to develop each part

198 1) Donor pollen size < Recipient pollen size

199 Effect:

- 200 • Donor's pollen could clog the stigma
- 201 • Chemical inhibition

202 Traits associated with bigger pollen of the recipient:

- 203 • Recipient's pollen have faster pollen tube growth (example with my data)
- 204 • Reduction in number of ovules (Also with my species)
- 205 • Big differences in pollen size can be translated in low relatedness therefore less likely of pollen  
206 germination on a far related stigma.

207 2) Donor pollen size = Recipient pollen size

- 208 • Very relatedness dependant this point

209 • Similar probabilities of taken space on the stigma

210 3) Donor pollen size > Recipient pollen size

211 Effect:

212 -In small stigmas big pollen grains can occupy great part of the stigmatic area.

213 -small pollen grains can get embedded

214 IB: Think also on using tree analysis to test if hp effect depends on complex trait combinations. Tree  
215 analysis are great when two different strategies lead to the same outcome. This would never been pick  
216 up by GLMs. The r package is `party`. You can see an example applied to birds is Sol et al 2010  
217 Science. Ask me if you want more details or code examples.

## 218 CONCLUSIONS

## 219 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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