

# 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).

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

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

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

77 For the understanding at what level or intensity the interference of pollen can occur is important to  
78 consider the relatedness of the interacting species. Closely related species are more likely to have  
79 similar traits Letten and Cornwell (2015). The similarity in traits between closely related species can  
80 lead to higher chances of ovule usurpation/abortion Arceo-Gómez and Ashman (2011) and therefore  
81 studies predict and show a greater negative effect of closely related species Ashman and Arceo-Gómez  
82 (2013); Arceo-Gómez and Ashman (2016). Few studies however, have focused on the impacts of  
83 heterospecific pollen on fitness of distantly related species Galen and Gregory (1989); Neiland and  
84 Wilcock (1999). Despite the fact that far related species are also able to decrease species fitness  
85 (REFS). Yet, most insects and most stigmas have been found to carry multiple species of foreign pollen  
86 with little attention to degree of relatedness (Arceo-Gómez and Ashman (2016); Fang and Huang  
87 (2013). Understanding the role of foreign pollen from distantly related species thus deserves greater  
88 attention. The relatedness of foreign pollen gives a first snapshot of where the pollen competition can  
89 occur and therefore could be a proxy of effect. With that said, Arceo-Gómez and Ashman (2016) is the  
90 only work which has proven a greater effect of close related species through a meta-analysis but 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 pollen 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 questions: (i) Do heterospecific pollen reduce seed set? To what extent do (ii) floral reproductive traits and (iii) 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 experimental design had species from three different families: Solanaceae, Brassicaceae and Convolvulaceae (**Table 1**). The species of the study had different reproductive traits and different degree of relatedness (**Figure 1**) where the reciprocal crosses between species allowed us to have multiple different scenarios of both traits and relatedness. Moreover, the species selected had fast life cycle and low structural flower complexity in order to perform the pollination treatments and grow the different species from seeds. For the purpose of the experiment all the species were 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).

112 **Table 1**

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



Figure 1: Phylogenetic tree of the ten species used in the experiment from three different families from bottom to top: Solanaceae, Convolvulaceae and Brassicaceae.

## 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 in order to see if foreign pollen  
116 can trigger fruit production by itself or even seeds through ovule usurpation. Therefore, we performed  
117 180 different heterospecific treatments (N=10). Seed set was the proxy of effect for all our treatments.  
118 Moreover, hand cross-pollination (between individuals of the same species), hand self-pollination,  
119 apomixis (bagged emasculated flowers) and natural selfing were tested for each species (N=10). For the  
120 treatments with foreign pollen and hand cross-pollination, flowers were emasculated the day prior  
121 anthesis and hand pollinated next day with a toothpick. Hand-pollination was conducted with 3-4  
122 gentle touches on the stigma surface. For each species 20 anthers were collected and their pollen  
123 counted with a hemocytometer, each anther was counted 4 times and then an average of these counts  
124 was performed. Once, the average number of pollen grains per anther was known, the proportion of  
125 anthers per mix was calculated in order to achieve a 50-50% mix. To confirm that the treatments  
126 applied were the desire proportions, the total stigmatic load of pollen was counted and the proportions  
127 calculated between the two species of the mix. Because pollen from the same family was difficult to  
128 distinguish, and we expected similar properties in mixing, we counted pollen from just one randomly  
129 selected species within each donor family different to the focal's family (N=3).

## 130 **Traits and evolutive distance**

131 The traits measured for each species were pollen per anther, number of ovules and stigma, style, ovary  
132 width and length. For the stigma, the stigmatic area was also measured and moreover the stigmas were  
133 divided in wet/dry type. All the morphometrical measurements were performed with a  
134 stereophotomicroscope. Pollen was counted for 20 anthers of each species with 4 replicates per sample  
135 with an hemocytometer. Previously, anthers were squashed on a known solution with the pippete tip  
136 and homogeneize with a vortex for 30 seconds. Ovule number was counted with the help of a  
137 stereomicroscope and a small grid over a petri dish from 15 randomly selected flowers. Fruits per  
138 number of flowers treated were counted for just Solanaceae species, we counted for all the species the  
139 number of seeds produced per average number of ovules. Levels of self-incompatibility were estimated  
140 by dividing the fruit set of hand self-pollination by hand cross pollination Lloyd and Schoen (1992).

## 141 Analysis

142 To evaluate heterospecific pollen effect on seed production we performed linear mixed models. The  
143 distinct heterospecific pollination treatments were compared through releveling each variable with the  
144 cross pollination treatment which was our control for optimum seed production for all the species. The  
145 different replicates of each treatment were considered as random effects. Seed production was scaled for  
146 all the species with mean 0 and standard deviation of 1 prior to the analysis. All the analysis were  
147 conducted with the statistical language R (R Core Team 2018).

148 In order to test the relative effect of traits on seed production with foreign pollen we performed Mantel  
149 test in R (Vegan package, Euclidean distance) between the assymetrical matrix of heterospecific pollen  
150 effect (10 by 10 matrix) with the different distance matrices of traits. Heterospecific pollen effect was  
151 obtained through the subtraction of seed production by hand cross-pollination minus seed production  
152 of the different heterospecific pollen treatments. To find a model with the best explanatory traits we  
153 used the function **bioenv** from R. We also conducted Mantel test between the matrix of heterospecific  
154 pollen effect and the distance matrix from all the traits. Moreover, we explored also the correlation  
155 between traits and heterospecific pollen effect through generalized mixed models where the response  
156 variable was heterospecific pollen effect and the explanatory variable the different traits. In addition,  
157 we tested the correlation between the total amount of pollen deposited on the stigma with  
158 heterospecific pollinations and the stigma size through Pearson's correlation.

159 We conducted mantel test to check for correlations between heterospecific pollen effect and phylogenetic  
160 distance. Due to improvents in statistical power we used the square root of the phylogenetic distance  
161 (Letten & Cornwell 2014). Two different phylogenetic distances were used from two kinds of markers: 1)  
162 Internal transcribed spacer (ITS) and 2) ribulose-bisphosphate carboxylase (RBCL). The sequences  
163 were obtained from GenBank (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/genbank/>, accessed 20 Oct. 2018). The  
164 sequences were aligned with clustal omega and the pairwise evolutive distances calculated with MEGA7.

165 [Phylogenetic signal of traits?](#)

166 [Add pollen on stigma counts to methods](#)

167 [Next bit to results, also divided it with ]



168 Total pollen deposited on stigmas was significantly correlated with the stigmatic area, pearsons  
169 correlation=0.57 and p-value=0.008. Proportions of pollen talk about it to 50-50 mix? Talk aboout  
170 this in methods too.

171 Add also plot with fruit production and pot it in appendix.Also the plots of ratios to appendices.

172 Add effect sizes to analysis!!

173 Mention that SI index is calculated (Schoen & Lloyd 1984)

## 174 RESULTS

175 Results of hand cross-pollination, hand self-pollination, natural selfing and apomixis are presented in  
176 **Figure 1** (see appendix 1 for table with values). Heterospecific pollen reduced seed set significantly  
177 with the 50-50% heterospecific pollen treatments for 65% of the pairwise interactions  $p < 0.05$ . Moreover,  
178 average effect sizes differed across species and across families, see **Figure 2**. Despite some variability in  
179 the effect of the different pollen donors per species, in general terms the effect of heterospecific pollen  
180 from the distinct nine treatments per species was homogeneous (see **Figure 3**), just for four species out  
181 of ten, just one donor did not overlap the confidence intervals with other donors. Therefore, none of the  
182 donors had a clear stronger or weaker effect across species. When the donors were groped by family not  
183 big differences were seen, just for *S. lycopersicum* the confidence intervals of Brassicaceae and  
184 Convolvulaceae did not overlap (see **Figure 4**). In addition, for the 100% hetrospecific pollen  
185 treatments we did not find almost seed production. However, for just one species (*S. alba*) the control  
186 pollination and the heterospecific pollination with pollen from a confamilial had similar seed  
187 production. For both Solanaceae species *S. melongena* and *C. annuum* 100% pollen treatments  
188 produced few seedles fruits (3% and 9% respectively) and they did not for the apomictic treatments.

189 Results of Mantel test between heterospecific pollen effect and phylogenetic distance gave a positive  
190 statistically clear correlation for both markers ( $p < 0.05$ ). The correlations with ITS and RBCL markers  
191 was respectively of 0.29 and 0.25. The phylogenetic signal of traits was significantly correlated with  
192 pollen size, stigma measurements and style length ( $p < 0.05$ ). Although with a lack of a significant

193 correlation pagel's lambda values were also relatively high ( $>0.45$ ) for incompatibility index, ovary  
194 length and levels of selfing. Moreover, Mantel test between heterospecific pollen effect and traits gave  
195 also a positive significant correlation with a  $r$  value of 0.4. When the effect was look trait by trait with  
196 Mantel test, stigma type and stigma measurements (length, width and area) gave a significant positive  
197 correlation with heterospecific pollen effect (LOOK AT HOW I EXPRESS THIS IS VERY  
198 RELEVANT, HP EFFECT FOR ME IS THE OPPOSITE)

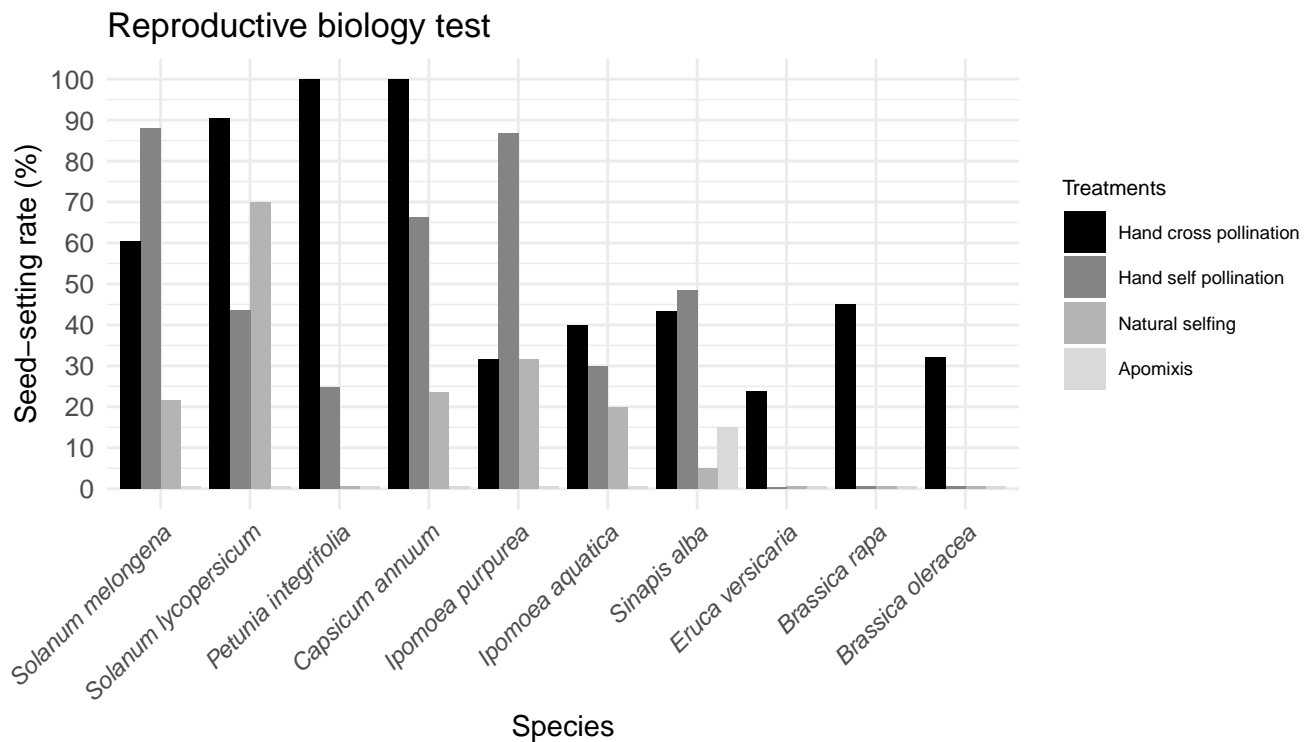


Figure 2: Barplot with the different treatments that provide information of the reproductive biology of the ten species. The y axis is the proportion of ovules converted to seed in percentage. The different treatments (N=10) which are presented in the legend are, hand cross-pollination, hand self-pollination, natural selfing and apomixis. More information about these treatments can be found in Methods and Appendices.

199 Maybe for this plot I have to do hedges'g instead of cohean because of different sample sizes when I  
 200 group the treatments per family. Check



Figure 3: Average effect size and confidence intervals (95%) of the 9 heterospecific treatments of 50% pollen to the different 10 focal species coloured by family.

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

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

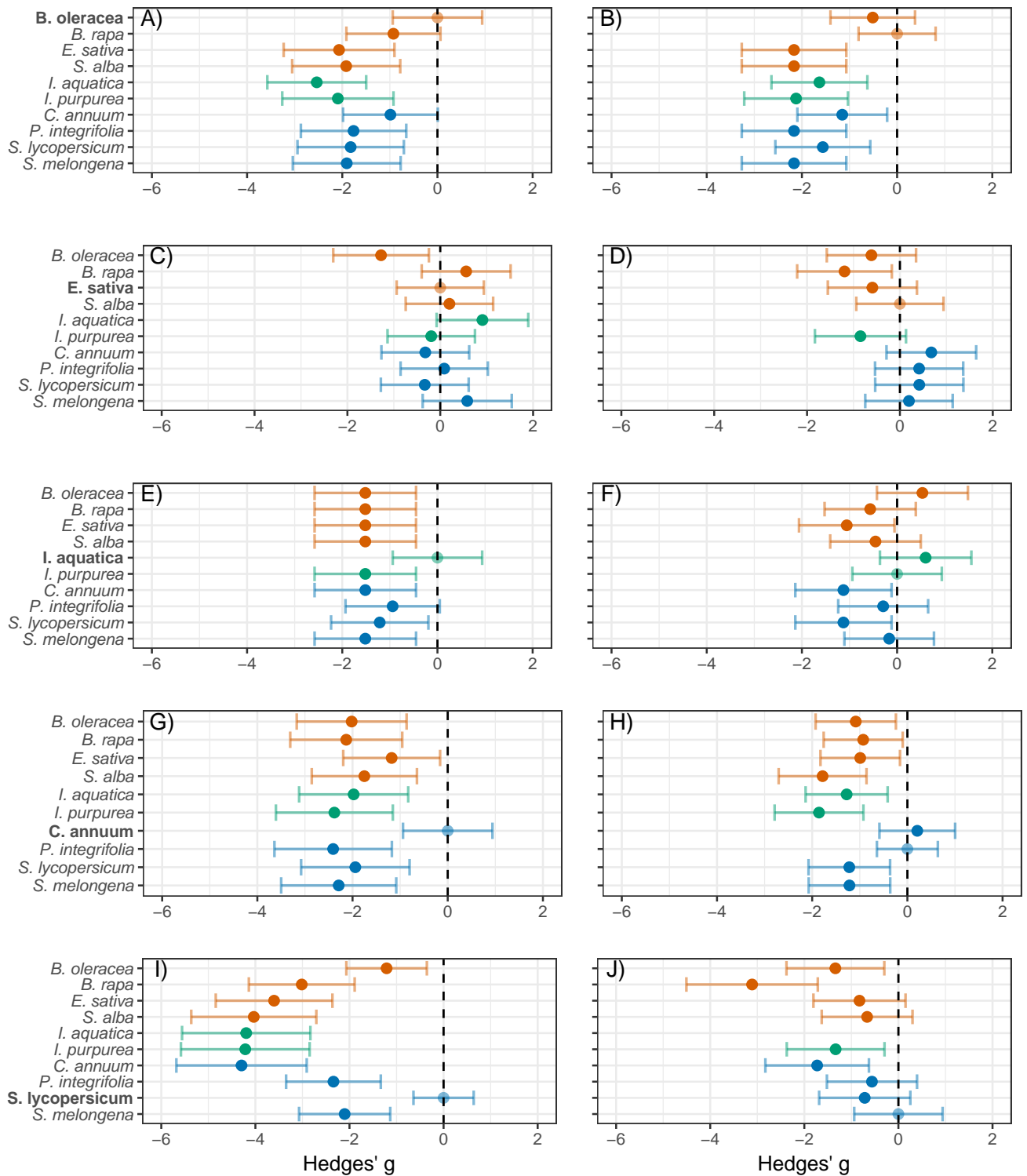


Figure 4: Effect sizes for the 10 different species. The different families appear with different colours, when a species was focal was coloured differently from its family.



Figure 5: A

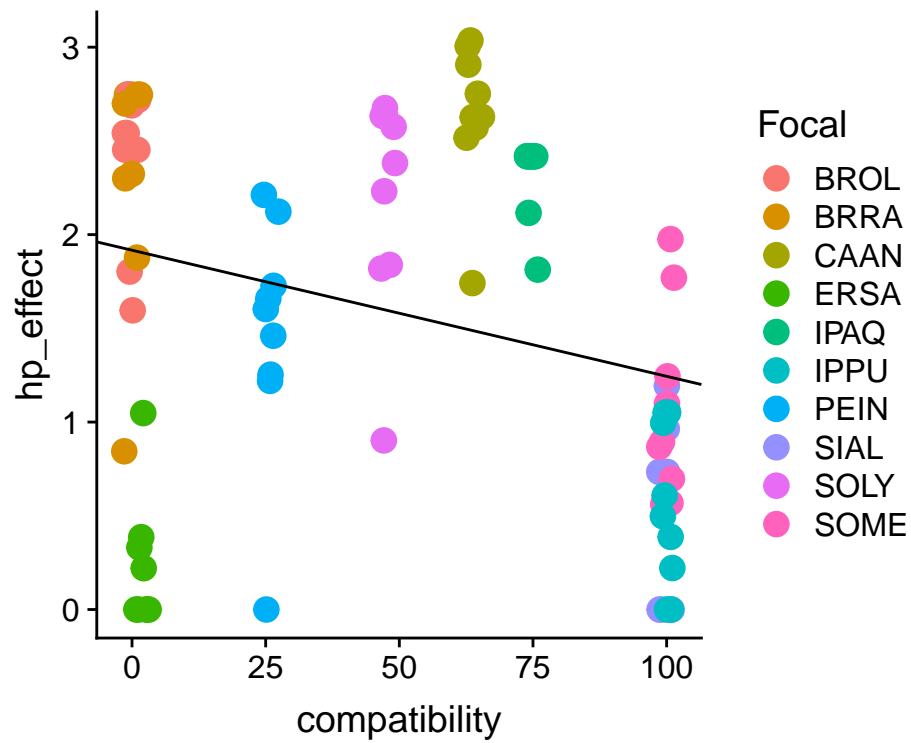


Figure 6: The effect of heterospecific pollen (scaled see set) is represented in function of the compatibility system (self/cross\*100) for the the different species. Each coulored dot represents the interaction of a focal species with a different pollen donor.

208 [Compatibility index don't multiply per 100 from Lloyd](#)

## 209 **DISCUSSION**

210 Discussion

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

213 What are the implications of the findings?

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

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

218 Now I try to develop each part

219 1) Donor pollen size < Recipient pollen size

220 Effect:

- 221 • Donor's pollen could clog the stigma
- 222 • Chemical inhibition

223 Traits associated with bigger pollen of the recipient:

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

228 2) Donor pollen size = Recipient pollen size

- 229 • Very relatedness dependant this point



- Similar probabilities of taken space on the stigma

3) Donor pollen size > Recipient pollen size

Effect:

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

-small pollen grains can get embedded

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

## CONCLUSIONS

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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294 **APPENDIX**

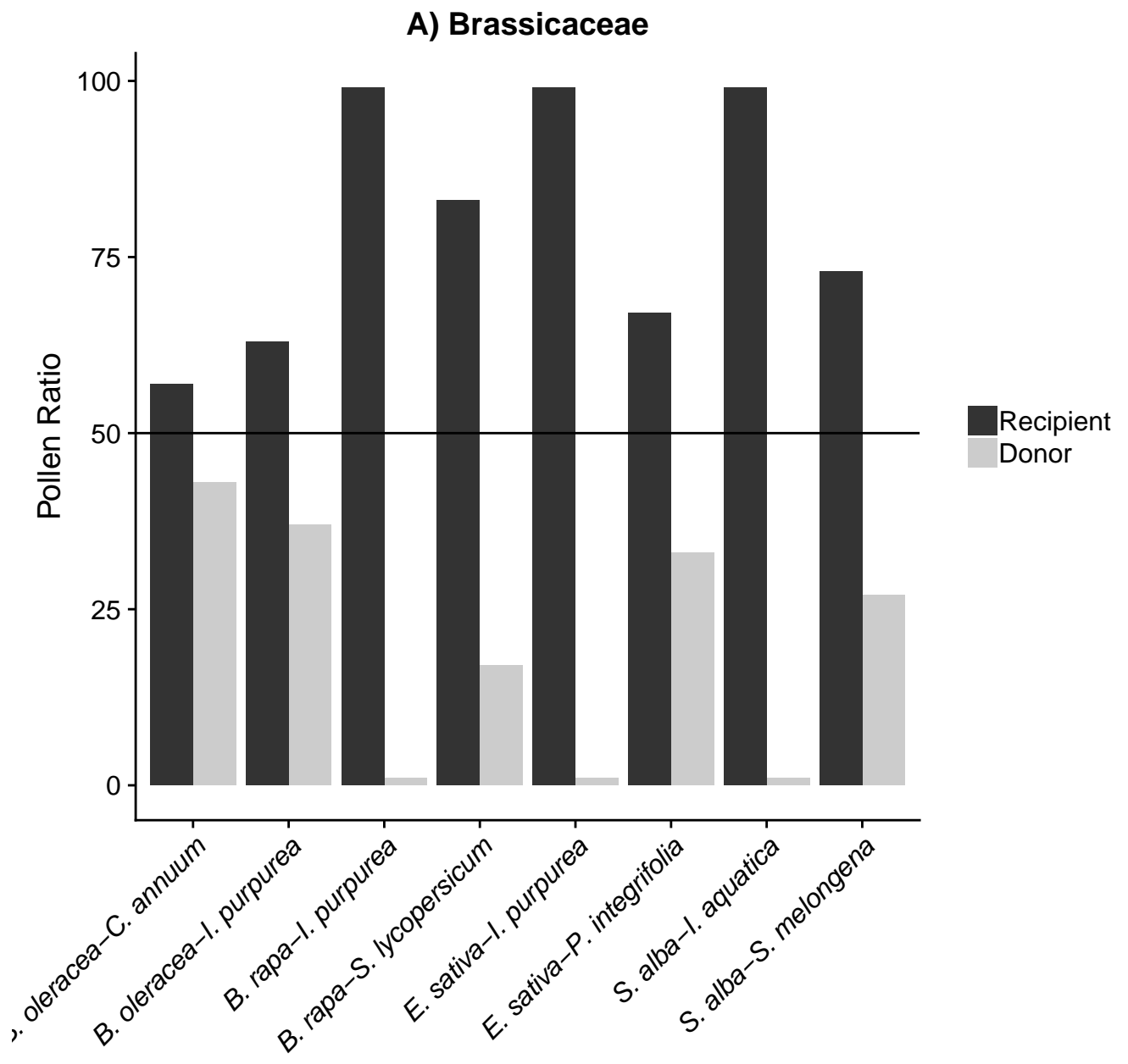
295 1.

296 **Table S1.** Perecentage of seeds produced per ovule for the ten species used in the experiment. The  
 297 treatments presented are hand cross-pollination, hand self-pollination, natural selfing and apomixis  
 298 (emasculated flowers).

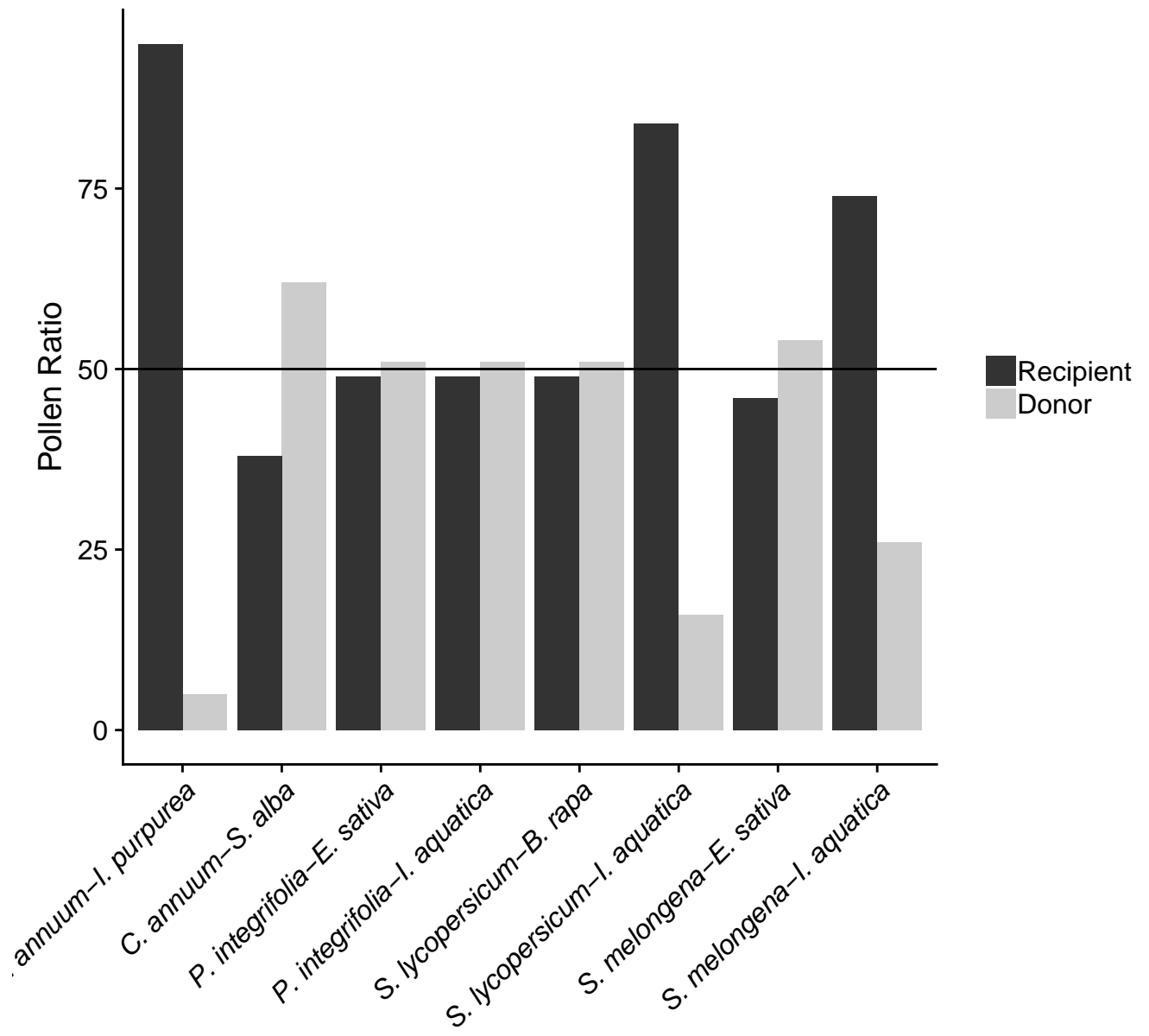
Species	Cross	Self	Natural_selfing	Apomixis
Brassica oleracea	32.06897	0.0000000	0.00000	0
Brassica rapa	44.97041	0.0000000	0.00000	0
Eruca versicaria	23.75000	0.4166667	0.00000	0
Sinapis alba	43.33333	48.3333333	5.00000	15
Ipomoea aquatica	40.00000	30.0000000	20.00000	0
Ipomoea purpurea	31.66667	86.6666667	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

299 2.

300 **Figure S1.** Pollen ratios separated by family A) Brassicaceae, B) Solanaceae, C) Convolvulaceae.  
 301 Pollen was counted for crosses with species of the other two families (N=3). To prepare these ratios all  
 302 the pollen grains on the stigma were counted.

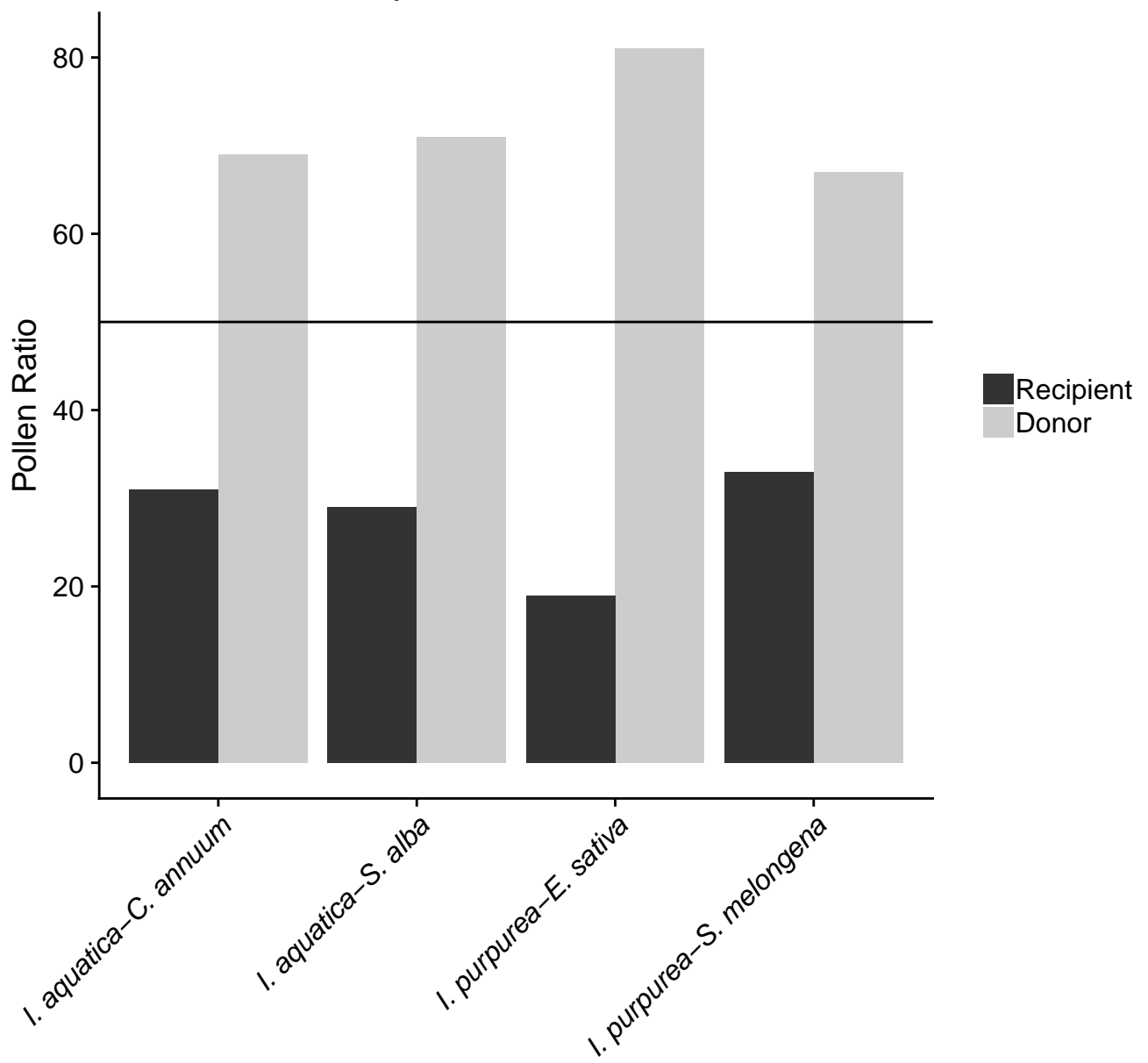


## B) Solanaceae



304

### C) Convolvulaceae



305





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319	5	A . . . . .	14
320	6	The effect of heterospecific pollen (scaled see set) is represented in function of the	
321		compatibility system (self/cross*100) for the the different species. Each coulored dot	
322		represents the interaction of a focal species with a different pollen donor. . . . .	15