# The pollination trade-off

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200-250 words

In the context of animal-mediated pollination, sharing pollinators between plant species creates a balancing act between two ecological opposites: mutualism and competition. Sharing pollinators can be beneficial because it allows plant species to harness positive feedback loops between populations. However, it can also be detrimental to co-flowering plants because pollen can be lost to foreign flowers and stigma surface can be occupied by foreign pollen. Although both mutualism and competition play an important role in shaping species interactions, competition is much poorly understood at the community level. Specifically, here we quantify the potential negative impact that the number of interacting species can play on the pollination service. To tease apart the multiple factors that operate at the community scale, we use data that describes both the structure of the interactions and the pollen flows that occur within it, all while accounting for the traits of the species that integrate the community. We found that there is indeed a trade-off between the number of interacting partners and both the quantity and quality of pollination received by different flowering plants. However, its role on pollination service is relatively small when compared to other ecological factors. In particular, competition for pollinators is more strongly shaped by density effects caused by the species abundance and amount of pollen it produces, as well as the plant’s functional originality. Concluding sentence of some sort belongs here….