

XI. NOTES ON COLLECTING FLOWER-VISITING INSECTS

Flower-visiting insects may play a role in the pollination of the flowers they visit. An important indication for this is the pollen they carry on their body. The transport of pollen does not prove pollination without observations of the behaviour of the insects on the flowers, but at least it offers suggestions for further research (concerning pollination as well as the biology of the insects). So a pollen-analysis on the load of the integument of these insects is of great importance to obtain a basis for large scale pollination studies. A pollenanalysis on the contents of the digestive tube may indicate whether it concerns anthophilous insects or not.

These notes are intended for botanists who may be able to collect the insects as well as the plants, or at any rate note the name of the plants. The entomologists for their part must be asked, if the plants are unknown to them, to collect some flowers or an inflorescence together with some vegetative parts for later determination.

Because of the relative few observations hitherto made a best first approach will be collecting insects on flowers. This does not include that insects caught in flight are not important for this study. If large amounts of specimens are collected throughout the year pollenanalyses indicate allo-, hemi- or eutropic visitor-blossom relationships.

Collecting insects for this purpose requires special care. The living insects should be separately put into small paper envelopes. These filled envelopes are put into the killing bottle. This to prevent 'false' grains on the integument. The envelopes can be numbered so that separate annotations are possible. After killing the insects it is of importance to store them very carefully and to keep them dry.

The pollenanalyses will be investigated in close collaboration with Mr. J. M u l l e r of the Rijksherbarium. Any literature on the subject has hitherto not been found. The intention is, to explore the subject for a number of years, and gradually to concentrate on a promising aspect.

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