

Identification of key insect pollinators and their active pollinating period of the day on selected vegetable plants in mixed cropping system

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Insects are important as main pollinators of many agricultural crops such as vegetables and fruits. Among them Hymenopterans and Lepidopterans are well studied as pollinators. Hymenopterans especially honeybees and butterflies were recorded as main pollinators of crop plants. Present study investigates the pollinators of five selected crop plants grown in a dry zone mixed cropping system. The study reveals that dwarf honeybee (*Apis florea*), Kanawe bee (*Trigona* sp.) and Blue banded bee (*Amegilla* sp.) are the most frequent visitors of Bitter gourd (*Mormodica charrantia*), Cucumber (*Cucumis satives*) and Snake gourd (*Tricosanthes cucumerina*) of family Cucurbitacea , Winged beans (*Psophocarpus tetragonolobus*) of family Fabaceae and *Solanum* sp of Family Solanaceae while butterfly species such as The Common Cerulean (*Jamides celeno*), The Lemmon Emigrant (*Catopsilia pomona*) and The Lesser Grass Blue (*Zizina otis*) regularly feed on the above plants. Since pollination is a passive process, we speculate that these species might be the most important pollinators of

above plants. Honey bees (*Apis cerana*) were present in the field during the study period they were not observed them visiting these vegetable flowers. The study revealed that all the pollinators are active during the morning period. Most pesticide application schedules have no or little concern on the behaviour of pollinators. Our data might be helpful in rescheduling the pesticide applications on the above plants.