

Sophisticated system prevents self-fertilization in petunias

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Plants use genetic mechanisms to prevent inbreeding by recognizing self and non-self pollen. Researchers from the Institute of Evolutionary Biology and Environmental Studies at the University of Zurich have now found evidence that a group of 18 male proteins recognize 40 female proteins between them – in contrast to one-to-one relationships studied to date. The self-recognition mechanism in petunia shows similarities to the immune defense in vertebrates.

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