

Flower sex

In 2020, I wanted to give myself a special treat for Christmas: a book - the title above is ambiguous and the subtitle "The shocking truth about the love life of plants" made the decision to buy easier. The author Michael Allaby has been engaged in writing all his life, however, the original text from the American may have been less flowery and so it is essential to mention the translator, Annika Genning.

In it, there are dozens of sex practices in the plant kingdom that truly amaze. Fascinating are the paths that some plants have taken during their evolution so that they do not reach a dead end, and if they do, they still have a plan B.



This envelope is a piece of commercial mail from Japan - a letter, with colored franking, showing dandelions with a rosebug, and a fire butterfly on a species of chamomile.

We will deal with the rose beetle, the dandelion and Plan B. Rose beetles (*Cetonia* sp.) are relatively large beetles that can be found on various flowers in the spring, including dandelions (*Taraxacum* agg.). This plant has different names, dandelion because of the good flying seeds, pissenlite because of the diuretic effect; dandelion is therefore also used in folk medicine. Dandelion honey, jelly, coffee substitute (root) are known. Milk sap has also been tested for the possibility of a rubber substitute since World War II. Dandelion flowers are classified as composite flowers, which means that they consist of hundreds of individual flowers. Generally they are pollinated by insects, e.g. rosebugs, bees and flies. However, the female ovules can divide several times until they produce a seed. This process is called agamospermy, apomixis by seed, and the offspring carry only the genes of the mother. After many generations, mutations can occur, slight changes that eventually lead to the emergence of a "small species". That is why dandelions are thought to have more than two hundred "minor species" (aggregations) in our latitudes.

Further reading: Michael Allaby 2018: *Blümchensex*, Goldmann.