

Flower hunting

In this series, student editor and MSc student of Plant Breeding Julia van der Westhuyzen (photos and text) and professor of Plant Ecology Joop Schaminée (stories) go looking for the loveliest campus flora.



Field scabious

Common name: Field scabious

Scientific name: *Knautia arvensis*

Flowering time: June to October

Where to find it on campus: on campus everywhere

‘This plant was named after the German botanist Christian Knaut. The common English name comes from its use as a treatment for scabies and other skin rashes. Its common name in Dutch, *beemdkroon*, means field crown: the flower is actually many flowers clustered together into what is known as a flower head. The flower has its own bee, the *Andrena hattorfiana*. This large, solitary bee is completely dependent on field scabious for food and doesn’t visit any other flower. The bee is very rare and usually only found around South Limburg but it was recently spotted in the WUR campus garden, a spectacular find. Research done at WUR found that it takes 72 clusters of flowers (or 11 individual plants) per day to provide for one average nest of this particular bee species. Finding this bee species on campus says great things about the biodiversity we have here.’