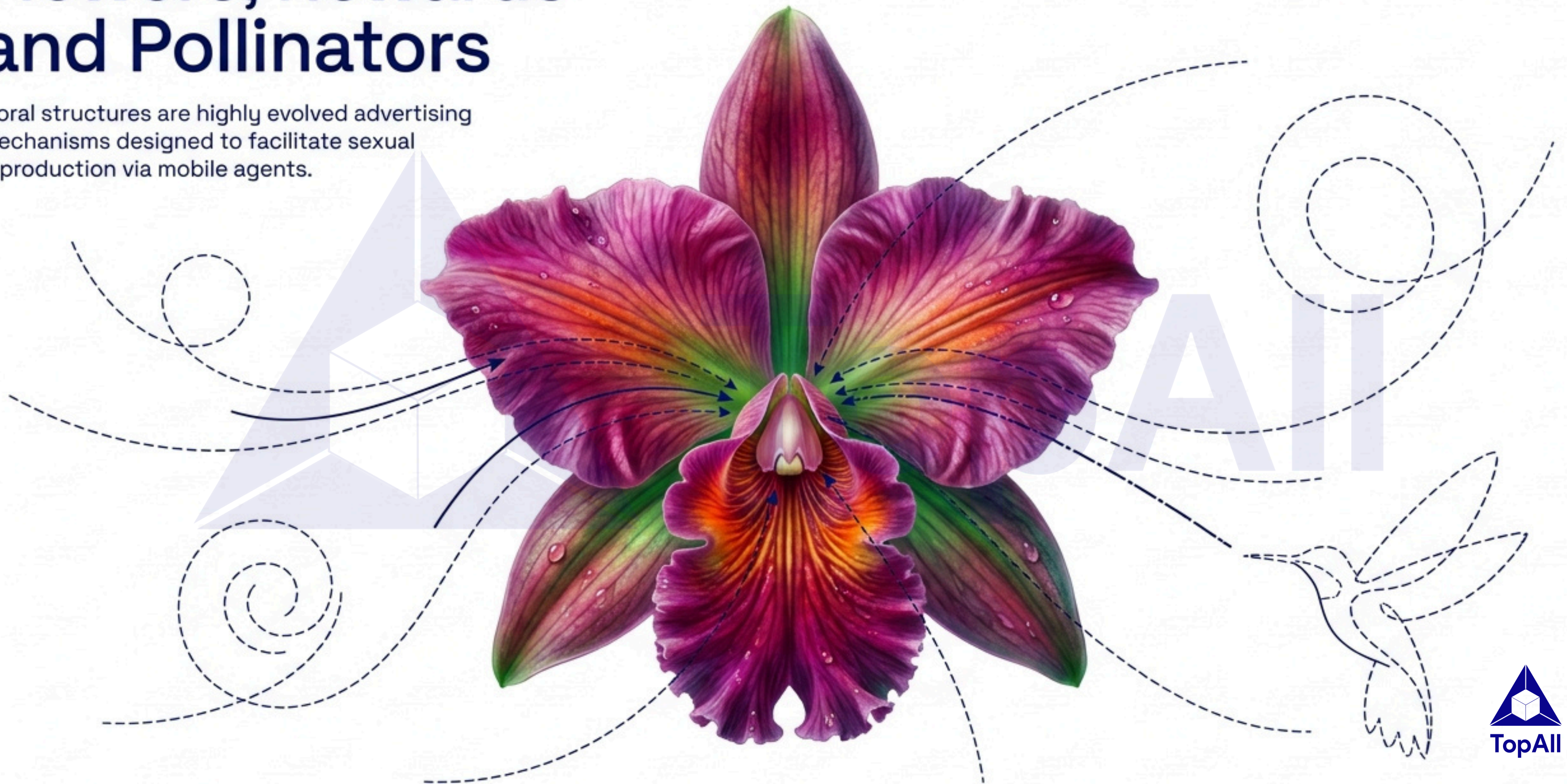


Flowers, Rewards and Pollinators

Floral structures are highly evolved advertising mechanisms designed to facilitate sexual reproduction via mobile agents.

ANGIOSPERM_REPRODUCTION

ECOLOGICAL_MARKETPLACE



Animal pollinators

INVERTEBRATA



Bees are the dominant biotic pollinating agents, supported by a vast network of other insect species.

VERTEBRATA



Avian and mammalian agents target specific floral architectures.

ATYPICAL POLLINATORS



Larger animals also participate in specific species, including primates (lemurs), arboreal rodents, and reptiles (gecko lizards and garden lizards).



Colour, fragrance and nectar

CONSPICUOUS



Large, colourful flowers visually attract bees and butterflies.

OLFACTORY



Strong fragrances sustain visits from moths and bees, operating independently of daylight.



Inflorescence Architecture

When individual flowers are too small, they cluster into an inflorescence to create a larger, conspicuous target.

FOUL ODOUR

Flowers pollinated by flies and beetles secrete foul, carrion-like odors specifically tailored to attract waste-seeking insects.



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$$E=mc^2$$



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Sticky pollen



EXINE
(OUTER WALL)

POLLEN GRAIN

ANIMAL
VECTOR

Anatomical Zoom

The body of the animal gets a coating of pollen grains. Unlike wind-pollinated species, animal-animal-pollinated flowers produce pollen that is highly sticky, ensuring it adheres strongly to the vector's body for transport to a stigma.

EVOLUTIONARY EFFICIENCY

Sticky pollen minimizes reproductive waste, transforming a chance encounter into a highly targeted payload delivery system.

Nectar and pollen rewards

Nectar



The primary energy currency. Sweet, high-calorie liquid secreted to sustain animal visits.

Pollen Grains



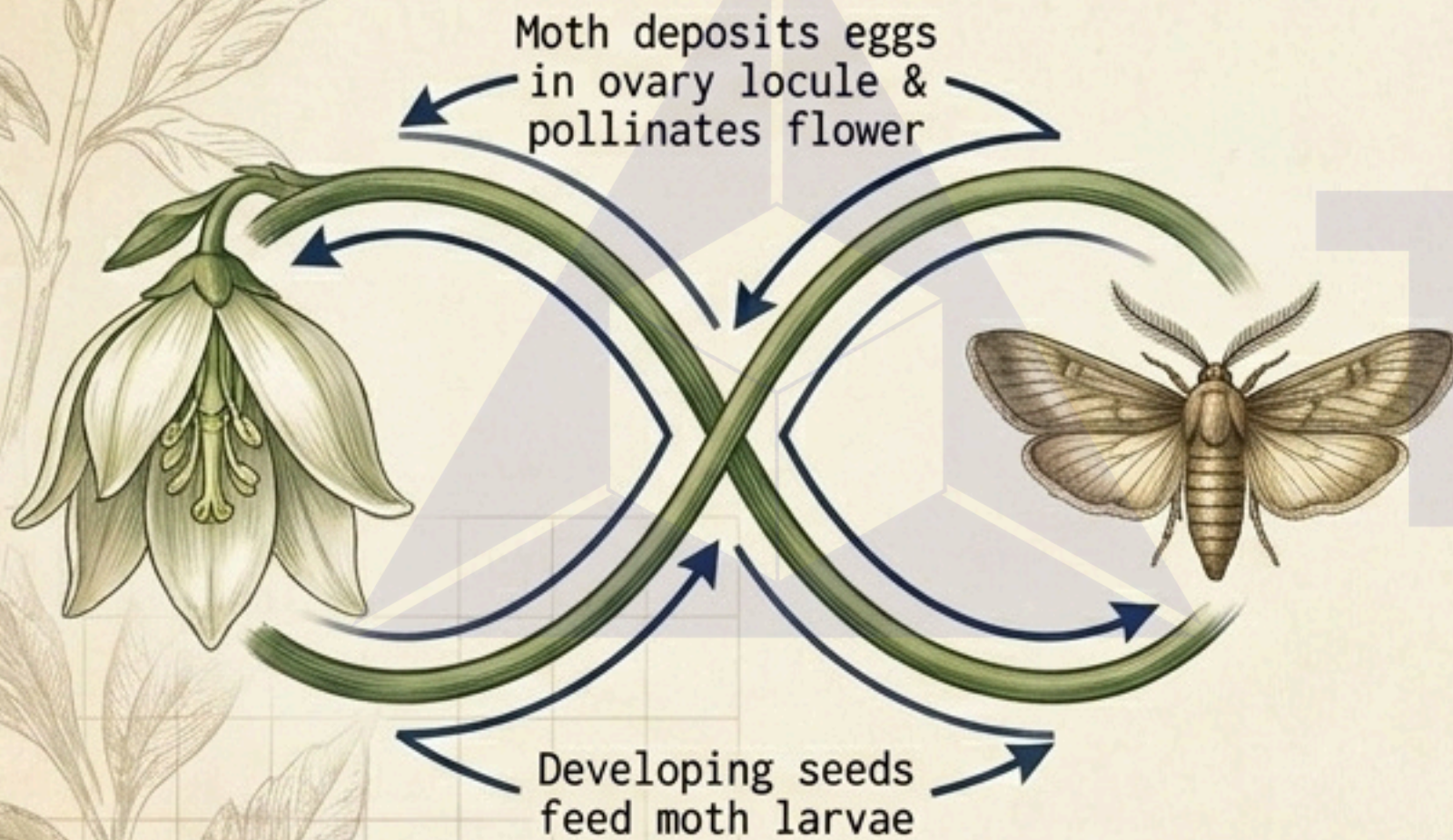
Consumed by some pollinators as a nutrient-dense protein and lipid food source.

The Toll

For harvesting the rewards, the animal visitor must unavoidably come in contact with the anthers and the stigma. The pollen transfer is the toll paid for the meal.

Yucca-moth relationship and pollen robbers

MUTUALISM



The Yucca plant and a specific moth species cannot complete their life cycles without each other. The moth deposits eggs in the locule of the ovary while simultaneously pollinating the flower. Developing seeds feed the larvae.

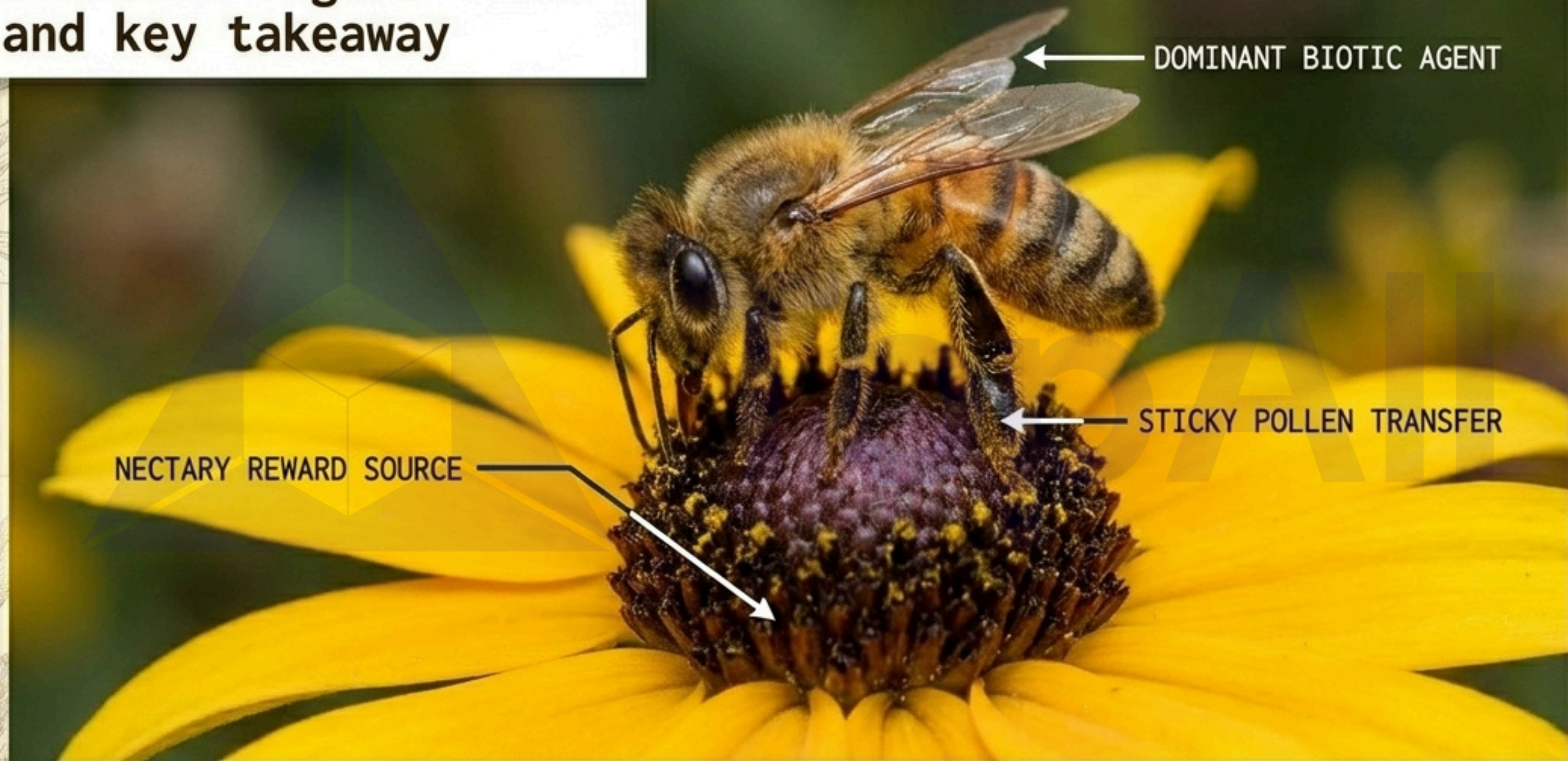
POLLEN_ROBBERS



Pierces corolla base, bypasses stigma/anther

Exploitation of the market. Floral visitors that consume nectar or pollen without bringing about pollination. They harvest the nutritional rewards without ever brushing against the anther or stigma.

Recreate Figure 1.11b and key takeaway



Biotic pollination is a marvel of co-evolution, trading nutritional rewards for highly targeted, genetically diverse reproductive success.



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