

EVALUATION OF FLORAL VISITORS OF THE MELON CROP AT ORGANIC FARMING IN THE SÃO FRANCISCO VALLEY, PETROLINA-PE, BRASIL

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The important crops pollinators have shown decline resulting in considerable economic impacts. Thus, this study aimed to evaluate the floral visitors of melon plants in organic farming. The experiment was conducted at 24 to 29 October 2010, in the Campo Experimental Bebedouro, Embrapa Semi-Arid, Petrolina-PE (09°09'S; 40°22'W e altitude de 350m). The frequency and behavior of floral visitors were observed from 5:00 a.m to 6:00 p.m, in five non-consecutive days, totaling 58 hours of sampling effort. The male and hermaphrodite flowers were selected randomly, marked with tape and labeled for subsequent analysis of results. The presence of pollinators were marked with the help of a counter and annotated in spreadsheets. The anthesis of flowers of melon occurred around 5:00 a.m. in the two floral types. As senescence, it was found that the male flowers (3:30 pm to 5:10 pm) started the process before of the hermaphrodite flowers (4:38 pm to 5:30pm). During the observations it was recorded the presence of *Apis mellifera* L.; *Plebeia* sp.; *Melipona quadrifasciata* L.; *Synoecca cyanea*.; Diptera sp. As the frequency of visits in relation to the type of flowers, it was found that 56.06% (n = 1170) were recorded in hermaphrodite flowers and 43.94% (n = 917) in male flowers. In both types of flowers, the peak visitation occurred from 10h01 to 11h00, and *A. mellifera* was the most frequent visitor. The appeal floral foraged, the male (89,42%, n=820) and hermaphrodites flowers (75,98%, n=889) were visited mainly for nectar collection. The diversity of insects found in the organic cultivation was higher than that reported for conventional farming, although while *A. mellifera* was the most frequent pollinator.

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