



Australian ground orchids of the genus *Diuris* mimic specific species of legumes that offer nectar to their pollinators. Their specific pollinators cannot distinguish them, so they go from flower to flower.

4: What If There's No Reward in the Flowers?

Some plants deceive their pollinators and offer no reward. This is a common strategy in orchids. Besides conserving their own resources, it also reduces the likelihood of self-pollination.



Australian ground orchids of the genus *Thelymitra* try not to look like orchids. Their lip (labellum) is almost identical to the other petals, the flowers close at night, and in the grass, they resemble the surrounding small bulbous plants. Pollinators that are less selective and visit a wide range of species struggle to distinguish between these flowers and end up trying every flower in the area.



European bee orchids (*Ophrys*) mimic female solitary bees with their lip (labellum). The lip has similar colours, and the flowers even emit a scent matching the females' pheromones. Impatient males attempt to mate with the flowers.



The orchid *Epipactis veratrifolia* imitates the scent of aphid pheromones with its flowers. The colours of its flowers also resemble a plant infected with aphids rather than a colourful flower. This attracts hoverflies, whose larvae feed on aphids. The females search for aphids in the flowers and lay their eggs there.