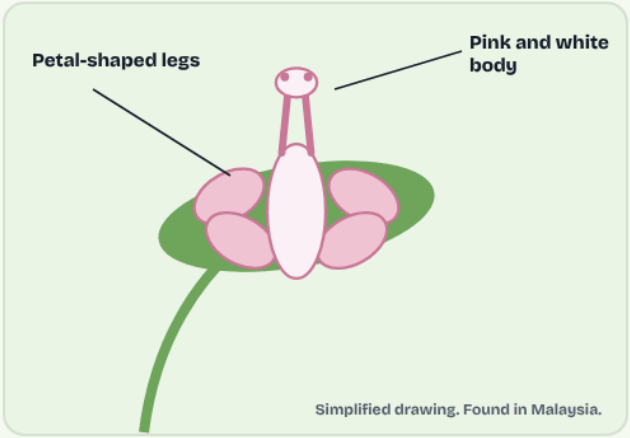
That is why

How does the orchid mantis lure its prey?

It looks like an average flower to a bee, draws pollinators more often than real flowers do, then eats them.

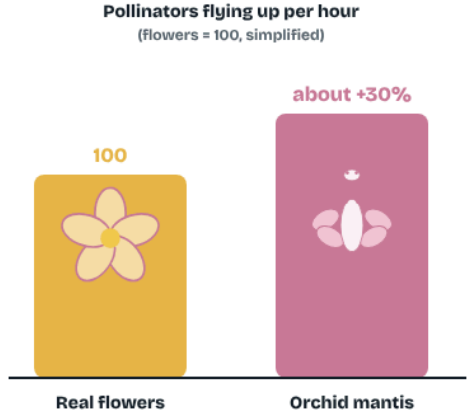
A A flower with legs



To a bee, it is a flower

Seen through a bee's eyes, the mantis's color can't be told apart from the flowers growing around it. Naturalists suspected this for over a century before anyone tested it.

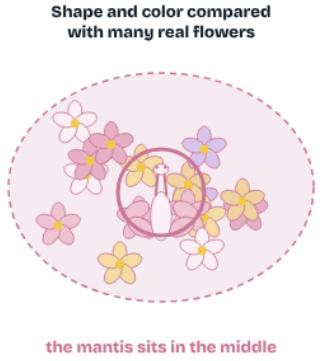
B Better than the real thing



1 Even on its own

A mantis sitting alone, away from flowers, still drew pollinators more often. Then it caught them.

C An average flower



1 No single model

Compared with petals, and with how bees, flies and birds see color, it matched no one flower: it looks like an average flower.

Not a copy of one flower, but the idea of a flower, with a mouth.

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