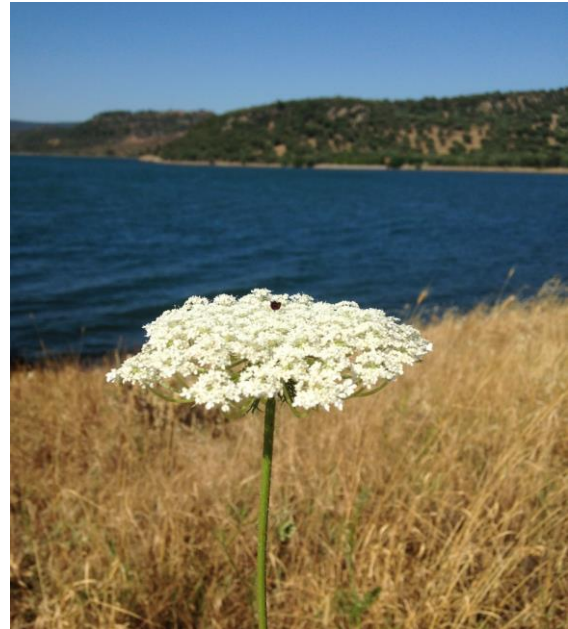


THE FUNCTION OF COLOURED CENTRAL FLOWERS IN THE WILD CARROT

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Wild carrot plants have tiny flowers clustered in an umbrella-like structure (umbel) at the end of a long stem. Flowers are white, except for one or several pink or dark purple flowers in the centre of the umbel. The function of these coloured flowers are unclear. Some researchers suggested that they do not have any function whereas others that they might help to attract pollinators. We investigated the role of these coloured flowers in the attraction of pollinators in a wild carrot population from western Turkey. We also examined if umbel size and height influence the attractiveness of these coloured flowers to pollinators. Our experiments indicate that height, not size, influences the attractiveness of the coloured flowers.



*Umbel of a wild carrot plant in Turkey
(Photo by Victor H. Gonzalez)*