

## Growing crops without bees? Mini greenhouse pollination drones might do the trick

Miniature drones are being used to pollinate indoor crops as part of research looking at alternatives to honey bee pollination.

Singapore company Polybee is testing its drones at the University of Western Sydney and with the South Australian company Perfection Fresh in trials funded by Hort Innovation as part of a \$60 million commitment to pollination research.

Honey bees struggle in covered environments and bumblebees, the gold standard for glasshouse pollination in the northern hemisphere, are not allowed to be imported into Australia.

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The head of the Western Sydney University trial, Dr Patsavee Utaipanon, said blow flies and native stingless bees would also be evaluated in the trial.

She said manual pollination would normally be done with a small paint brush or by shaking the plants to spread pollen between flowers.

"But it's very time-consuming because you have to pick the flower at the right age, and then it is very labour-intensive," Dr Utaipanon said.

Mr Jadhav said Polybee's drones used off-the-shelf technology, but the algorithms driving them also provided highly accurate yield forecasting.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the original post here\*\*](#)