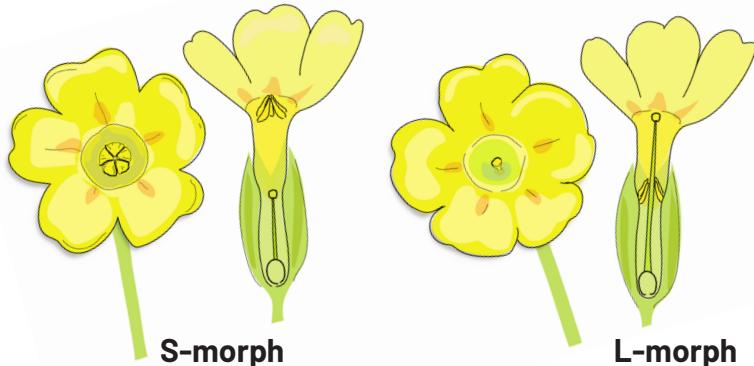


Looking for Cowslips!



Looking for Cowslips is a citizen science campaign which started in Estonia in 2019. Our team of Landscape Biodiversity at the University of Tartu uses the cowslip (*Primula veris*), a characteristic grassland plant, as a model for exploring the effects of grassland loss on plants. We found that a seemingly small botanical detail, i.e. heterostyly, in cowslips may have substantial consequences for the future and well-being of this nice grassland plant.



Very excited and puzzled by our observation, we decided to explore patterns of cowslip flowers further. And that is how this little floral detail, which fascinated already the grand old man of evolutionary biology Charles Darwin, became the core of our citizen science campaign.

With the help of thousands of Estonian citizen scientists, we gathered lots of valuable information from all across the country, and reached new and even more puzzling results! The scientific paper about these first exciting results was recently published in the [Journal of Ecology](#).

To continue this thrilling scientific journey on heterostyly, which was initiated by Charles Darwin, we invite You to join our campaign and help to conduct the campaign all over Europe!

'Looking for Cowslips' has been active for two years and has engaged thousands of people, including pupils and kindergarten kids. The campaign has proven to be fun and a good educational activity for people of all ages. Furthermore, the collected data has provided novel scientific insights about the mating patterns and well-being of our grassland plants.

See more at the campaign's webpage: www.cowslip.science
Send an email to info@nurmenukk.ee

We invite You to participate in a pan-European Citizen Science Campaign “Looking for Cowslips”!

Who are we? We are ecologists of the Landscape Biodiversity Workgroup at the Institute of Ecology and Earth Sciences, University of Tartu, Estonia. We study the impact of landscape changes on various aspects of biodiversity and related ecosystem services.

We focus on species-rich grasslands as a study system. These valuable and eye-catchingly beautiful habitats have lost most of their area throughout Europe. This puts many plants and animals under great threat.

Why is it important? Our studies help to explain the consequences of grass-land loss for biodiversity. Our team is dedicated to communicating these issues to conservation practitioners, the public and scientific community. We aim to offer solutions for protecting and restoring biodiversity, and related ecosystem services, such as pollination. We work in collaboration with institutions governing and implementing environmental and conservation measures.

‘Looking for Cowslips’ is a pan-European initiative, where we collect citizen science data to (a) improve fundamental research on plant mating systems and (b) to provide understanding of the consequences of grassland loss for biodiversity.

Meet our cowslip team:



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