The Attractive Odors of Dung

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Scarab beetles find their resources for feeding and reproduction mainly by olfaction. Dung beetles arrive at freshly emerged faeces often within less than a minute indicating a particularly efficient olfactory attraction. About 250 odorous components have been identified from faeces. In a pilot study in Ivory Coast, we tested 17 of them and found six more or less attractive to dung beetles, but combinations of all or several attractive components mostly outperformed single substances. The crucial components of an attractive bouquet are 2-butanone and butyric acid, and the combination of both is almost as attractive as the mix of the mix of all 17 substances tested. The field experiments are currently complemented in Austria.
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Program and Abstracts

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