1 Title: <u>Fitness and mating consequences of variation in male allocation in a wind pollinated plant</u>

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10 Abstract: In hermaphrodites, the allocation of resources to each sex function can influence 11 fitness through reproductive success and mating success. In wind pollinated plants, sex allocation theory predicts that male fitness increases linearly with investment of resources into male 12 13 function. However, there have been few empirical tests of this prediction. We experimentally 14 manipulated allocation to male function in Ambrosia artemisiifolia (common ragweed) in a field 15 experiment and measured mating success using genetic assays. We investigated the effects of 16 various morphological traits and flowering phenology on male fitness, and on male and female 17 mate diversity. Our results provide evidence for a linear relation between allocation to male 18 function and fitness. We find earlier onset of male flowering time increases reproductive success, 19 while later onset flowering time increases the probability of mating with diverse individuals. 20 This research is among the first empirical studies testing the prediction of linear male fitness 21 returns in wind pollinated plants. Our results provide insight into the large investment into male 22 function by wind pollinated plants and temporal variation in sex allocation.

23 Introduction

24 Hermaphroditic organisms attain fitness through both female and male sex functions and they 25 can maximize reproductive success through a wide variety of different strategies. Most flowering 26 plants are hermaphroditic and because of vector-mediated gamete transfer, plant mating can be highly promiscuous with individuals mating with numerous sexual partners through either sex 27 28 function. The ecological and genetic factors that determine reproductive success have been well 29 documented for female function because of the relative ease of assessing fitness through 30 maternal contribution. In contrast, success through male function has been more difficult to 31 quantify because it relies on using molecular markers to identify paternity. With current molecular techniques, we are beginning to gain an understanding of male mating success, 32 33 including who has mated with whom and how often (e.g. Tomaszewski et al. 2018; Christopher 34 et al. 2019; Santos del Blanco et al. 2019).

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36 Sex allocation theory considers how the fitness acquired through each sex function varies with 37 the investment of limited resources into female or male reproductive structures (Charnov 1982; 38 Charlesworth 1991; Brunet 1992; Emms 1993). In general, hermaphroditic organisms should 39 invest in both sex functions to the point where the marginal fitness returns are equal, at which 40 point investment should turn to the sex function with the more linear, or less decelerating, sex 41 function (Charlesworth 1991; Brunet 1992). The shape of the fitness gain curve is determined by 42 a variety of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, including dispersal dynamics, biotic interactions, 43 sibling competition, and mating patterns (Harder and Thomson 1989; Harder and Barrett 1995; 44 Zhang 2006). While there has been extensive theoretical treatments of sex allocation theory,

empirical support for their predictions, particularly regarding fitness through male function,remains limited.

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48 In sessile plants that rely on external vectors for transferring and receiving pollen, various 49 features of the pollination environment can affect the shapes of fitness gain curves. Many animal 50 pollinated plants likely have diminishing returns on investment in male function due to a variety 51 of processes, including pollinators becoming saturated with pollen after visiting a plant (Lloyd 52 1984), pollinator grooming removing pollen (Harder 1990), and deposition of related pollen 53 causing local mate competition (Charnov 1982). In contrast, in wind pollinated plants the male gain curve is expected to be more linear (Burd and Allen 1988; Klinkhamer et al. 1997; Sakai 54 55 and Sakai 2003). There are several explanations for this. First, it is unlikely that the air can 56 become saturated with pollen, at least within the scope of biologically plausible pollen 57 production. Second, once pollen is liberated from a plant, pollen loss from the airstream should 58 be stochastic and independent of an individual plant (Niklas 1985). And finally, conspecific 59 pollen captured by stigmas is likely proportional to its concentration in the air (although there might be subtle differences depending on pollen size (Paw U and Hotton 1989; Friedman and 60 61 Harder 2005). Similar arguments have been made for the male gain curve in sessile spermcasting 62 marine organisms (reviewed in Schärer 2009). Together these factors suggest that for a given 63 individual, producing more pollen should result in siring more offspring (ie. linear relation 64 between allocation to pollen production and fitness).

65

66 Sex allocation theory also explains shifts in relative resource allocation to female or male
67 function with plant size (Klinkhamer et al. 1997; Zhang 2006). Larger and taller plants often

68 have more resources to invest in gamete production leading to greater fecundity. This can 69 produce a "budget" effect of plant size on sex allocation. Generally, access to more resources is 70 associated with greater relative allocation to female function (Lloyd 1984; Korpelainen 1998; 71 Chen et al. 2017), because of the greater cost associated with producing seeds and fruit. In addition to the budget effect, size can also have a direct effect on fitness, where larger plants 72 73 have greater fitness than small plants for a given investment in reproduction. For example, in 74 wind pollinated plants, the physical placement of male flowers at higher positions or at the tips 75 of long branches, results in more effective pollen dispersal and greater siring success (Young and 76 Schmitt 1995; Tonnabel et al. 2019a). The influence of budget and direct effects of plant size on 77 sex function may be aligned, but the underlying mechanism might be through selection on 78 fecundity or through access to more mates.

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80 Male mating with more than one female partner is almost ubiquitous in the flowering plants 81 although whether this arises as a by-product of selection on siring success in general, or on 82 outcross mate diversity in particular is not clear (Pannell and Labouche 2013). Mating with 83 multiple partners can provide an advantage— regardless of any increase in total fecundity—by 84 increasing the genetic diversity of offspring (Barrett and Harder 2017). Higher mate diversity 85 almost certainly increases the variance in offspring genotypes and may decrease the variance in 86 final offspring number (for example, by minimizing the risk of unsuccessful pairings) which 87 raises the probability of successfully leaving offspring (Gillespie 1974; 1977). Producing a set of 88 genetically diverse offspring increases the probability of generating a "winning" phenotype 89 (Williams 1975; Maynard Smith 1976). Increasing the variance in offspring genotypes is 90 especially beneficial in heterogeneous environments if it produces genotypes that succeed in

91 different conditions, akin to bet-hedging strategies (Antonovics and Ellstrand 1984; Simons 92 2011). Finally, greater mate diversity may reduce sibling competition between related sibs 93 (Karron and Marshall 1990). From the maternal perspective, a common measure of mate 94 diversity is to determine the genetic contribution of different fathers to the seeds on a plant 95 (correlated paternity, r_p : Ritland 2002). This measure can be extended to consider the entire 96 mating portfolio of a plant (Barrett and Harder 2017) through both male and female function, 97 although a full quantification of mate diversity is rare (but see Tomaszewski et al. 2018; 98 Christopher et al. 2019).

99

100 Mating opportunities between plants are influenced by the timing of female and male function 101 (Lloyd 1980). The vast majority of studies on the evolution of flowering time have focused on 102 animal pollinated plants, and fitness through female function (Christopher et al. 2020), but of 103 course selection through the two sex functions need not be in harmony (Delph and Ashman 104 2006). Selection on male flowering time may be driven by mating opportunity or through genetic 105 covariation with other traits (Austen and Weis 2016a). Furthermore, many hermaphroditic and 106 monecious plants have some temporal separation in the onset of female and male function 107 (dichogamy; Bertin and Newman 1993) that leads to a shift in the mating environment (the 108 relative abundance of female and male phase flowers) through time. For example, in protandrous 109 plants, the floral sex ratio shifts from male- to female-dominated during a population's flowering 110 season (Brunet and Charlesworth 1995; Brookes and Jesson 2010). This means that in general, 111 early male-phase flowers encounter pollen competition for few ovules compared with later male-112 phase flowers that have access to more ovules (Nakamura et al. 1989; Stanton 1994). This effect

is weakened if protandry in incomplete and flowering duration is long with substantial overlap insex function.

115

116 Our primary goal in this study is to use a manipulative field experiment to evaluate the effect of 117 allocation to male function on siring success and mate diversity in a wind pollinated herbaceous 118 plant. We also set out to determine if there were additional benefits accrued through plant size 119 (height, width, and plant biomass) on siring success; and to determine the effect of flowering 120 time on mating opportunities and reproductive success through male function. We used the 121 monoecious herb, Ambrosia artemisiifolia (common ragweed), a weedy annual plant that is 122 known to produce a prodigious amount of allergenic pollen. It has been well established in A. 123 artemisiifolia that sex allocation is both size and resource dependent, where taller plants and 124 those with high light availability invest more in male function (McKone and Tonkyn 1986; 125 Ackerly and Jasieński 1990; Traveset, 1992; Paguin and Aarssen 2004; Friedman and Barrett 126 2011a; Nakahara et al. 2018). To achieve our aims we experimentally manipulated allocation to 127 male function to limit confounding sex allocation with overall condition or plant size and to 128 produce individuals with a range of different male allocation patterns (Emms 1993, Schärer 129 2009). After allowing plants to naturally wind pollinate, we used genetic markers to estimate the 130 progeny sired by each plant. This study represents the first attempt to estimate the male gain 131 curve in a wind-pollinated plant after experimentally controlling for male allocation (similar to a 132 series of studies in free-spawning animals; Yund and McCartney 1994, McCartney 1997, Yund 133 1998, Johnson and Yund 2009) and to quantify mate diversity through paternal function.

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135 Methods

136 Study Species

137 Ambrosia artemisiifolia L. (common ragweed) is an early successional weed that inhabits a 138 broad range of habitats including roadsides, cultivated fields, and disturbed lands (Bazzaz 1974). 139 The species is monoecious, producing male inflorescences at the tips of branches and inconspicuous female flowers in leaf axils (Payne 1963). Ragweed can produce between 200 and 140 141 6000 seeds depending on the plant's condition (Fumanal et al. 2007), although fecundity is 142 substantially lower when plants are disturbed or transplanted. Plants are usually weakly 143 protandrous at the plant level (i.e. male flowers open before female flowers) and there is 144 plasticity in the degree and order of dichogamy (Friedman and Barrett 2011a). Ragweed is self-145 incompatible (Friedman and Barrett 2008), so that all seed are outcrossed. In addition, it is an 146 annual plant reproducing entirely through seed (Bassett and Crompton 1975), which allows for 147 more easily quantifying fitness.

148

149 Experimental Design

150 Between June 1-5 2017, we collected A. artemisiifolia seedlings at the 4-leaf stage from 18 151 natural populations around Syracuse, NY, USA. The populations were selected arbitrarily, 152 ensuring they were approximately 4 km apart (range: 4-9 km). We collected plants from multiple 153 sites to increase the genetic variation in microsatellite loci, which we would later use for 154 paternity assignment. We dug up seedlings and immediately transplanted them into 2.5 cm pots 155 filled with Sunshine Mix4 (Sun Gro Horticulture). We maintained the plants in their pots for 8 156 days, then transplanted them into randomly predetermined locations in three blocks in a field at Syracuse University, NY, USA (43°00'47"N 76°07'07"W). The three blocks were spaced 157 158 approximately 15m from each other, and each block was covered with groundcloth to inhibit

weed growth. Within each block, we planted 64 plants in a square grid, with individuals 50cm away from each other. We planted equal numbers of all subpopulations into each block (n=4 per subpopulation per block) and recorded the specific location of each plant. We monitored the plants' condition and replaced any dead plants up to two weeks after transplanting in the field (n=12 transplants).

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We minimized pollen contamination by naturally occurring ragweed by mowing the field around the three blocks every two weeks and manually removing any ragweed surrounding the field site at least twice a week. The larger area around the experimental garden was maintained by Syracuse University and received considerable mowing and horticultural maintenance, which reduced the overall presence of ragweed plants.

170

171 To limit confounding sex allocation with overall condition or plant size (Emms 1993, Schärer 172 2009), we artificially manipulated male allocation by randomly assigning each plant to one of 173 four male allocation categories that differed in their maximum number of branches bearing male 174 inflorescences per plant. We started the manipulations between August 1-5 (which coincided 175 with when the very first plants began flowering) after allowing plants to grow for about seven 176 weeks. We cut male inflorescences from each plant to match its pre-assigned allocation category, 177 and maintained the number of inflorescences by removing a subset of newly emerged male 178 inflorescences twice a week. The four categories had a maximum of 4, 8, 16, or 32 branches 179 bearing male inflorescences per plant. Although the number of branches increased exponentially, subsequent branches have fewer and shorter inflorescences, so this approximated a linear 180

increase in male flowers (Figure S1: category 4 has greater variance because we could only
remove excess branches from the randomly assigned individuals).

183

184 We measured plant height from ground level to the base of the inflorescence spike, and measured 185 width at the widest point of the plant including branches. We recorded these size measurements 186 three weeks after transplanting (17 July 2017) and repeated the measurements on 7 August and 7 187 September. We also recorded the date the first female and male flower opened on each plant. 188 Subsequent to the initial difference in onset of female and male flowers, plants continue 189 producing new flowers of both sex functions throughout the blooming period (see Figure 4 in 190 Friedman and Barrett 2011a). Once plants started senescing (between October 2 and 15, 2017), 191 we harvested male inflorescences from each plant and separately collected above-ground plant 192 material. We dried the male inflorescences and above-ground plant material for 3 days at 70°C, 193 then recorded the biomass as proxies of male allocation and plant size, respectively. 194 195 We allowed plants to pollinate naturally within the field. We randomly selected a subset of plants 196 (n=24 per plot, total=72) from which we collected at least 60 seeds twice: once when the plants 197 first matured seeds (between September 12 and 26, 2017), and once before the plants were 198 harvested (between October 1 and 12, 2017). We refer to these plants as 'maternal' plants but 199 recall that the species is monoecious, so these focal 24 plants are also 'paternal' plants. We 200 ensured that the maternal plants were evenly represented among the four male allocation 201 categories. We avoided collecting seeds from plants at the edges of plots as they were not

surrounded by experimental plants in all directions.

203

204 Parent and progeny genotyping

205 We collected fresh leaf tissue from all experimental plants in the field on August 23-25 for 206 subsequent genotyping. We stored leaf tissue at -80°C until DNA extractions could be 207 performed. On December 21, 2017, we stratified 60 seeds (from an equal mix of early and late collection dates) from each of the 72 focal maternal plants in the dark at 4°C for 16 weeks, and 208 209 then planted them in 96-well plug trays filled with Sunshine Mix4 mixed with 25% sand. We 210 planted more seeds than we intended to genotype to ensure we had 24 seedlings per maternal 211 plant. The average germination probability of the seeds was 68.5 percent. We maintained plants 212 in the greenhouse under 16-hr photoperiod and 21°C/18°C day/night temperatures. After six 213 weeks, once the majority of plants were at the 4-leaf stage or larger, we collected fresh leaf tissue 214 from 24 progeny per maternal plant, and stored the plates at -80°C until DNA extractions could 215 be performed.

216

217 We extracted DNA from frozen leaf tissue of the 1728 progeny and 192 field plants using a 218 modified CTAB protocol. We then used seven polymorphic microsatellite markers that were 219 previously developed for A. artemisiifolia (Genton et al. 2005; Chun et al. 2009) to identify male 220 parentage. We performed polymerase chain reaction using Bio-Rad thermocyclers (see Table S1) 221 and labelled PCR products were analyzed at the Institute of Biotechnology at Cornell University 222 on an ABI 3730xl DNA Analyzer using GeneScan LIZ500 size standard (Applied Biosystems, 223 Foster City USA). We manually scored the genotypes using GeneMarker v.2.2.0 (Soft Genetics, 224 State College USA). We used CERVUS version 3.0.7 (Field Genetics Ltd, London UK), to perform paternity analyses using stringent parameters with a minimum of 3 typed loci and 225

accounting for a 1% genotyping error rate and assigned paternity using a strict (95%) confidencecriterion.

228

229 Data analysis

230 We assessed reproductive success in three ways. First, we quantified the total number of seeds 231 sired by each plant and refer to this as *male reproductive success*. Second, we quantified the 232 number of unique plants on which a given individual sired seed and we refer to this as *male mate* 233 *diversity*. Third, we quantified the number of seeds sired by different pollen donor plants on a 234 given focal plant and we refer to this as *female mate diversity*. Note that we did not quantify total seed production by plants (female reproductive success). Our primary aim was to evaluate the 235 236 association between male allocation and the measures of male reproductive success (total 237 number of seeds sired and number of mates), including their relation with each other, and effects 238 of size and flowering time.

239

240 All analyses were performed using R version 4.1.1 (R Core Team 2021). We used generalized 241 linear mixed models (GLMMs) using the glmmTMB package (Brooks et al. 2017) and marginal 242 means were estimated using the package emmeans package (Lenth 2021) We used the DHARMa 243 package for diagnostic tests of residuals (Hartig 2017). We had three sets of models, where the 244 response variable was either male reproductive success, male mate diversity, or female mate 245 diversity. In all models, we included the fixed effects of male allocation, female flowering day, 246 male flowering day, plant width, plant height, biomass, and whether the plant was located on the 247 edge or interior. The latter effect was excluded in models of female mate diversity since all 248 plants were located in the interior; in this model we additionally included germination

249 probability of seed. Two random effects were included in all models: block and source 250 population. We identified significant terms in the model using AIC scores and log-likelihood 251 ratios of model fit, and present the simplest model of best fit (except when the term reflected 252 experimental design, like edge effect). We tested for significant differences among categories 253 using Dunn-Sidak adjustment for multiple testing. Recall that we quantified male allocation in 254 two ways—the categorical manipulation the plant received, and the continuous measure of male 255 inflorescence weight. Thus, we ran separate models including either measurement as a fixed 256 effect. The two sets of models produced very similar results, which is not surprising because the 257 two measures of male allocation are strongly statistically associated (Figure S1). 258 259 Models of male reproductive success used a negative binomial distribution with the canonical 260 link function. Additionally, to specifically evaluate the shape of the male gain curve, we fit a power function ($y=ax^b$; Charnov 1979; Johnson and Yund 2009) to the continuous male 261 262 allocation data. The exponent of the power function (b) describes the shape of the curve. If the 263 exponent does not differ significantly from 1 then reproductive success approximates a linear 264 function of male allocation; if it is significantly <1 or >1, reproductive success is either a 265 saturating or accelerating function of male allocation, respectively. Models of mate diversity 266 required accounting for the number of seeds sired. Thus, we used a binomial model (unique

mates/total seeds sired) with prior weights, which best captured the underlying biological process
and accommodated the frequent occurrence of the upper bound. Models of female diversity used
a poisson distribution with an offset parameter of the number of seeds genotyped and the
canonical link function.

271

We investigated the fitness accrued through male function by mating with additional mates by estimating the slope of a least-square regression between standardized male mating success and standardized male reproductive success ('Bateman gradient': Arnold and Wade 1984). The model included covariates for flowering time, male allocation, edge location, and random effects accounting for block and source population. We compared the likelihood of linear and quadratic terms in the regression using AIC scores and log-likelihood ratios of model fit.

278

279 We considered the spatial dispersal of successful pollen transfer by calculating the Euclidean 280 distance between a pollen donor and the plant on which it sired offspring. Note that because of 281 our experimental design there was a 15m gap between any two blocks. We modeled mating 282 distance using generalized linear mixed models (GLMMs) using the glmmTMB package, with a 283 gamma distribution. To investigate the effect of morphological and phenological variables on 284 dispersal distance, we included male inflorescence weight, plant height, plant width, biomass, 285 female flowering time, male flowering time and edge as fixed effects, and candidate father 286 identity as a repeated random effect. To investigate the relation between mean dispersal distance 287 and reproductive success we modeled the effects of male siring success and male mate diversity 288 as fixed effects. To visualize variation in dispersal kernels, for every pollen donor plant that sired 289 more than 5 seeds, we fit a Weibull distribution to its dispersal kernel, and extracted the shape 290 parameter, κ , and the scale parameter, λ for each pollen donor plant. We also used the software 291 $NM\pi$ (Chybicki 2018) to calculate the parameters of the pollen dispersal model. Specifically, we 292 estimated average dispersal distance (δ_p), the shape of the exponential-power dispersal kernel 293 $(b_{\rm p})$, the intensity of directionality of dispersal ($\kappa_{\rm p}$), and the prevailing direction of pollen 294 dispersal (α_p).

295 **Results**

296 Identification of mating outcomes

A total of 1257 (72.7%) offspring were assigned paternity, the remaining 471 (27.3%)

individuals were excluded because either confidence was low, or no paternity matches were

found using the parental genotypes (ie. the seed were sired by plants outside the experimental

300 fields). Of the 192 experimental plants, 176 plants (91.7%) sired seed. Of the 16 plants that were

301 not represented in the paternity of seed, three plants were removed from the analysis because

302 they were typed at less than three loci, and the remaining 13 plants were not identified as the

303 father for any genotyped seed.

304

305 *Pollen dispersal and siring distance*

306 The incidence of mating strongly declined with distance, with a heavy-tailed distribution. Plants 307 sired most of their seeds locally, where siring peaked within half a meter of pollen source and 308 declined rapidly over the 25 m distance of the field (distance between mates: mean = 2.81 m, SD 309 = 5.03 m.; Figure 1A, solid line). Known intermate distances were vastly smaller than the 310 distances between all pairs of plants (ie. all possible mates; t=52.91, P<0.001) and also smaller 311 than the distances of all within-block pairs of plants (t=4.39, P<0.001) —reflecting the 312 predominance of mating amongst near neighbours. Of the seed we successfully genotyped, 313 90.7% were sired by fathers within the same experimental block (1127 of 1242), and only 9.3%314 were due to longer distance siring events between blocks. None of the morphological or 315 phenological variables we investigated (male inflorescence weight (or allocation category), plant biomass, width, height, the onset of female or male flowering) had any effect on siring distance, 316 317 and there was also no relation between siring distance and either the number of seeds sired or

mate diversity. The only variable that was significantly associated with dispersal distance was whether plants were located in the interior or the edge (adjusted for other effects in the model, mean dispersal distance: edge: 2.92 m, 95% CI: 2.38-3.59; interior: 2.24 m, 95% CI: 1.89-2.66; t=1.94, P<0.05).

322

323 There was substantial variation among plants in their fitted dispersal distributions. To visualize 324 the variation in the distribution of inter-mate distances, we plot the fitted Weibull distribution for 325 a random subset of 10 plants (Figure 1B) and also show the trajectories of pollen dispersal for 326 the same subset of 10 plants (Figure 1C). The Weibull distribution is described by the shape 327 parameter, κ , and the scale parameter, λ . Among individual candidate fathers, estimated shape κ 328 had range=0.62-4.74 (mean=1.51) and the estimated scale λ had range=0.72-6.39 (mean=2.30). 329 We next used NM π (Chybicki 2018) to calculate properties of the pollen dispersal kernel. 330 Similar to the results using other methods, the estimated average dispersal distance (δ_p) was 1.2m 331 with high variance (S.E.=1.3m), the shape of the exponential-power dispersal kernel (b_p) was 332 0.18 (S.E.=0.14), the intensity of directionality of dispersal (κ_p) was 0.48 (S.E.=0.31), and the 333 prevailing direction of pollen dispersal (α_p) was 2.68 with high variance (S.E.=8.93). 334

335 Male reproductive success

Individual plants sired a mean=6.60 (SD=6.53, Range=0-39) seed, of the successfully genotyped
offspring. The effect of our experimental manipulations resulted in plants with greater male
allocation siring significantly more seed than plants with less male allocation (Table 1A; Figure
Adjusted for other effects in the model, plants in the lowest allocation category sired an
average of 4.44 seeds (95% CI: 3.36-5.87) while plants in the highest allocation category sired an

average of 8.05 seeds (95% CI: 6.28-10.31). When we consider allocation as a continuous variable modeled as male dry inflorescence weight, we found that the number of offspring sired increases significantly with male inflorescence weight (Table 1B; Figure 2B). The exponent of the power function (*b*=0.85, SE=0.30) saturates slightly, but did not significantly differ from one (t_{168} = -0.45, *P*=0.65), indicating a significant linear relation between male allocation and siring success (*F*_{1,168}=7.68; *P*<0.001).

347

We found a strong effect of the timing of onset of male flowering on male reproductive success where earlier flowering plants sired significantly more seed (Table 1). Moreover, we found a significant interaction between allocation and male flowering time, whereby only plants in categories 1, 2, and 3 experienced greater reproductive success if they started male flowering earlier (Table 1A; Figure 2C). Plants in the highest allocation category had similar reproductive success regardless of when they flowered (Table 1A; Figure 2C).

354

In contrast to our expectation that larger plants would sire more offspring, we discovered that neither plant height nor biomass had a significant effect on the number of seeds sired. Instead, we found that wider plants had greater male reproductive success (Table 1; $\beta \pm$ SE =0.08 ± 0.005; Figure S3). Plants located on the edge of the arrays sired significantly fewer seeds than plants located in the interior (edge: mean: 4.97 seeds, 95% CI: 4.06-6.08; interior: mean: 6.52 seeds, 95% CI: 5.45-7.82; Table 1).

362 *Mate diversity*

363 There was a significant positive linear Bateman gradient indicating a strong relation between mating and reproductive success (Figure 3; $\beta \pm SE = 0.71 \pm 0.04$, $\chi^2 = 235.41$, P < 0.0001). We 364 365 also found a significant quadratic term ($\gamma \pm$ SE =0.12 ± 0.03, γ^2 = 24.75, P <0.0001). These 366 relations were independent of male allocation. 367 368 We calculated male mate diversity by quantifying the number of mates to which a pollen-donor 369 plant successfully dispersed pollen and sired seed. Of the genotyped seed, plants donated pollen 370 to and mated with a mean=4.91 (SD=2.55, Range=1-14) different individuals. In raw numbers, 371 males with larger male allocation had greater mate diversity (mean cat1: 3.71; cat2: 4.08; cat3: 372 5.61; cat4: 5.98), however this was likely a consequence of siring more seeds overall. In models 373 that accounted for the total number of seeds sired, we found no significant effect of male 374 allocation on mate diversity (Table 2). 375 376 We previously reported that early flowering plants sired more total seeds (Figure 2C), when we

we previously reported that early flowering plants sired more total seeds (Figure 2C), when we investigate mate diversity it appears that many of those seeds were more likely to be full-sibs (i.e. sired on the same plant). Individuals that flowered later had a probability of greater mate diversity (Table 2; Figure 4A), that is, they donated pollen to and sired seeds on more unique mates. Amongst the morphological characteristics we measured (plant width, plant height, and biomass) none of them had a significant effect on mate diversity, after controlling for the number of seeds sired.

383

We quantified female mate diversity as the number of different pollen donor plants that sired seed on a given plant. We genotyped a subset of seed per plant (mean=17.25, SD=2.43,

Range=11-22). Of these genotyped seed, plants mated with a mean=11.06 (SD=2.64, Range=5-16) different pollen donors. Plants that initiated female flowering later produced seeds that were sired by a greater diversity of pollen donors, than those with an earlier onset to female flowering (Table 2, Figure 4B). There was no association between female mate diversity and the allocation class of the individual, nor any of the measured morphological traits (height, width, biomass), nor germination probability.

392

393 Discussion

394 Our results are consistent with the hypothesis that wind pollinated plants experience linear 395 fitness gains with increased male allocation. Experimentally manipulating the number of male 396 flowers elicited predicted changes in the number of offspring sired—plants with more male 397 flowers sired significantly more offspring than plants with fewer male flowers. We found 398 minimal direct effects of plant height on reproductive success, although plants with greater width 399 (longer branches) had higher male fitness. We found significant, and surprising, influences of the 400 timing of flowering, where an earlier onset to male flowering was beneficial for reproductive 401 success, especially for plants with fewer male flowers. In contrast, individuals with later male 402 flowering had relatively higher male mate diversity, and similarly later onset to female flowering 403 was associated with seeds sired by a greater diversity of mates. Finally, our quantification of 404 seed siring distance identified a strongly skewed and heavy-tailed distribution of successful 405 pollen, with most seeds sired on nearest neighbours. Below, we consider the implications of 406 these effects of sex allocation, intermate distance, and flowering time and their possible 407 consequences on the evolution of reproductive strategies in wind pollinated plants.

408

409 Incidental and unintended experimental consequences

410 Here we address the possible implications of several features of our experiment. First, we 411 artificially created classes of plants with different male allocation to avoid confounding our 412 intended variable of interest with overall condition or budget effects of plant size. This treatment 413 necessarily involved removing male flowers, and for obvious reasons we could not artificially 414 add male flowers. One implication of this is that we cannot test whether further exaggeration of 415 male allocation will result in a saturation of reproductive success. We followed previous workers 416 and fit a power function to our male gain curve data (Johnson and Yund 2009), and an implicit 417 assumption of this is that males could theoretically produce enough pollen to monopolize 418 fertilizations, which is presumably biologically impossible under at least some range of 419 conditions. Second, because of the inflorescence architecture of A. artemisiifolia, when we 420 removed male inflorescences we necessarily interfered with the height and width of plants, 421 because male inflorescences are borne on terminal racemes. There was a modest, but significant, 422 reduction in height and width for the lowest allocation treatment, but none of the other treatments 423 differed significantly from each other (Figure S2). Our analyses accounted for this statistically by 424 initially including all effects as covariates, but nonetheless we may have reduced power to 425 identify direct effects of size on reproductive success. Third, we used a square lattice design 426 which meant that plants are not equidistant to their first-order neighbours (i.e. horizontal and 427 vertical neighbours are 0.5 m, but neighbours along the diagonal are 0.7 m). This is not a 428 problem, per se, but should be considered when interpreting intermate distance.

429 Male reproductive success and pollen dispersal

430 Our results are consistent with predictions from sex allocation theory that male fitness increases

431 linearly with male allocation. To our knowledge, the only other explicit test of the male gain

432 curve in wind pollinated plants comes from a natural stand of white spruce trees, where trees that 433 produced more male cones sired a greater proportion of seeds (Schoen and Stewart 1986). There 434 is some evidence that in the wind-pollinated herb *Mercurialis annua* plants with greater pollen 435 production have greater reproductive success at high density (Tonnabel et al. 2019a). In this 436 species, males with morphological traits that facilitated farther pollen dispersal achieved greater 437 fitness, and only marginally improved fitness with greater pollen production. A previous study in 438 A. artemisiifolia demonstrated that male reproductive success increased with height and male 439 reproductive investment (Nakahara et al. 2018), but whether this was due to budget or direct 440 effects of plant size was unclear. Other studies have reported that male reproductive success increases linearly with male allocation in spermcasting marine invertebrates (Yund and 441 442 McCartney 1994; McCartney 1997), or shown that the male gain curve becomes more linear 443 under certain ecological conditions like intense local sperm competition or mating over larger 444 distances (Yund 1998; Johnson and Yund 2009). Our finding of a linear gain curve means that 445 increased allocation to pollen production should be favored under some ecological conditions. 446 Previous work demonstrated substantial genetic variation for plasticity in male allocation in 447 ragweed (Friedman and Barrett 2011a), so that allocation may respond adaptively to ecological 448 conditions.

449

Because we experimentally manipulated plant size, we removed budget effects (i.e. the effect where plants in better condition or larger plants invest more in reproduction because they have a larger resource budget), any remaining effects of plant size on male fitness would more likely be due to direct effects of size (Klinkhamer et al. 1997). Experimentally controlling for male investment, we found no association between plant height and siring success. Similarly, there

455 was no significant effect of plant height on male reproductive success in M. annua (Tonnabel et 456 al. 2019). But our result is discordant with a different study in A. artemisiifolia that found a weak 457 effect of plant height on siring success, although the effect depended on model assumptions 458 about neighbourhood size (Nakahara et al. 2018). All of these studies were conducted in 459 common garden arrays where the benefit of height might be diminished compared to natural 460 settings, because of the reduction in intervening vegetation. Nonetheless. for herbaceous plants 461 occurring in open environments, siring success may not be strongly influenced by plant height, 462 but by other aspects of size that affects the ability to better disperse pollen. 463 464 We identified a benefit of plant width on male reproductive success. Although we did not 465 initially predict this, the architecture of the plant suggests that this effect is due to the 466 aerodynamics of pollen release in wind pollinated plants (Niklas 1985). All objects are

467 surrounded by a layer of still air, and the size of the boundary layer is determined by the size of

the solid structure disrupting air flow. An important adaptation for wind pollinated plants is

469 positioning male flowers away from vegetative structures to get them out of the boundary layer

470 and enhance pollen liberation from anthers (Timerman and Barrett 2021). In many species this

471 involves extending the anthers on long filaments that vibrate in the wind (Timerman and Barrett

472 2018). However, in *A. artemisiifolia* dehiscent anthers extend only just below the downward-

pointing floret (Payne 1963), and so the position of the staminate head on branches that extendbeyond foliage may better expose them to the wind to increase vibration and facilitate the release

475 of pollen into the airstream (Friedman and Harder 2005). Similarly, in *M. annua* selection favors

476 males with wider diameters in combination with longer branches and greater biomass (Tonnabel

et al. 2019a). Thus, there is increasing evidence that branching architecture may provide directbeneficial effects for male fitness in wind-pollinated plants.

479

480 Wind-dispersed pollen typically has a leptokurtic distribution from point sources (Bateman 1947; 481 Gleaves 1973; Levin and Kerster 1974), so that the seed set of recipients should decrease rapidly 482 with distance from the pollen donor. Our results are consistent with this. Most plants sire seeds 483 on their nearest neighbours, and the distance between mates shows a strongly fat-tailed 484 distribution. Other studies have found similar results, for example pollination success in *Taxus* 485 declined with plant spacing (Allison 1990); in dioecious *Thalictrum* species female plants at 486 greater distance from males had reduced seed set (Steven and Waller 2007); and in Festuca 487 pratensis, most pollen was deposited within 75m of donors (Rognli et al. 2000). In our 488 experiment, none of the morphological variables we measured had any significant effect on the 489 distance between mates. Similarly, Nakahara et al. (2018) found no effect of plant height on the 490 the maximum distance between mates. These findings are in contradiction to the theoretical 491 expectation that taller wind pollinated plants will have farther pollen dispersal (Burd and Allen 492 1988), and indicate that plant height may have only limited consequences for pollen dispersal in 493 herbaceous plants in open fields. Indeed, successful matings at the farthest distances in our 494 experiment (between blocks) appear to be stochastic. Nonetheless, for plants that sired fewer 495 seeds overall, these long-distance siring events represent a greater proportion of their total seeds 496 sired. While most mating occurs very locally in wind pollinated plants, rare longer-distance 497 mating events may profoundly impact genetic structure and patterns of genetic variation 498 (Loveless and Hamrick 1984).

499

500 Mating portfolios and the benefits of mate diversity

501 We found high variance in both male reproductive success and male mating success, as expected 502 under Bateman's principle and sexual selection (Tonnabel et al. 2019b). To investigate the 503 fitness accrued by mating with more partners, we estimated the Bateman gradient for male 504 function, and identified significant positive linear and quadratic (accelerating) terms. This 505 relation was not influenced by allocation category or male inflorescence weight, suggesting 506 consistent benefits for all individuals. Similarly, while individuals with more male flowers had 507 greater mate diversity in absolute terms, this was entirely driven by their concomitant increase in 508 reproductive success. This finding supports the proposition that multiple mating in plants is a by-509 product of selection on male function to increase siring success (Pannell and Labouche 2013). 510 Mating with multiple female partners (high mate diversity) provides a quantitative advantage 511 through male function, and our data corroborate that mating opportunities constrain male 512 reproductive success.

513

514 There is scant evidence that mate diversity, per se, is under selection or beneficial (Barrett and 515 Harder 2017). However, several lines of evidence suggest that genetic diversity may be 516 advantageous through a process of 'genetic bet-hedging'. When stochasticity is incorporated into 517 measures of natural selection, then fitness depends on both the mean and the variance in 518 offspring number (Gillespie 1974) and increasing the variance in offspring number of a genotype 519 will decrease its fitness (Gillespie 1977). To the extent that mating between any two individuals 520 leads to low fitness (e.g. due to genetic compatibility), then having a greater diversity of mates 521 could reduce the variance in offspring number and increase mean fitness. A second related 522 argument is that genetic diversity within families is beneficial for offspring success in the face of

523 temporal or spatial heterogeneity. When environments are heterogeneous, offspring diversity 524 raises the chances that some offspring succeed, thus decreasing the variance in success and 525 increasing geometric mean fitness (Slatkin 1974; Simons 2011). In animals, various lines of 526 evidence suggest that genetic bet hedging is unlikely to be solely responsible for maintaining 527 polyandry, unless the costs of multiple mating are very low (Yasui 1998; Jennions and Petrie 528 2000). Indeed, in plants the costs of multiple mating are likely low, especially for wind 529 pollinated plants that are not investing in showy flowers, raising the likelihood that genetic bet-530 hedging provides a selective advantage.

531

532 Mate diversity can also be considered from the perspective of the interactions among siblings – 533 both during seed development and subsequent dispersal and establishment. First, genetic 534 variation among developing embryos provides an opportunity for maternal resources to be 535 distributed to the highest quality embryos and potential abortion of incompatible or low-quality 536 embryos (Zeh and Zeh 1996; Haig and Westoby 1988). However, sibling competition within the 537 developing fruit can be detrimental to both maternal and paternal parents, and several plant 538 reproductive strategies may have evolved to reduce mate diversity within an ovary (Kress 1981; 539 Bawa 2016). For example, generalist, indiscriminate pollinators are most likely to deliver 540 unrelated pollen grains onto stigmas, and there is a well-established association between uni-541 ovulate flowers and abiotic and generalist pollinators (Charlesworth 1993; Friedman and Barrett 542 2011b). Like most wind pollinated plants. A. artemisiifolia has flowers with single ovules, so 543 differential maternal investment would occur among developing fruits on a plant. Second, greater 544 mate diversity increases the number of half-sib families rather than full-sib families, so in species 545 with restricted seed dispersal establishing seedlings are less related. Genetic diversity among

seedlings reduces sib-competition thereby increasing maternal (and paternal) fitness (Cheplick
1992). Furthermore, to the extent that pollen dispersal is limited, genetic diversity of offspring
will reduce biparental inbreeding (Uyenoyama 1986) and any accompanying inbreeding
depression (Charlesworth and Willis 2009). Future work is necessary to partition the relative
influence of these factors on selection for mate diversity.

551 The benefits of temporal separation in flowering

552 The temporal separation of flowering between sexes (dichogamy) generates uneven sex ratios 553 across a flowering season (Brunet and Charlesworth 1995; Sargent and Roitberg 2000), which is 554 paradoxical because frequency-dependent selection should act to equalize the availability of 555 pollen and ovules at every point in time. The benefits of dichogamy (and protandry in particular) 556 include avoiding interference between male and female sex organs (Lloyd and Webb 1986; 557 Bertin 1993) and preventing selfing (Darwin 1876). Neither of these mechanisms are likely 558 responsible for protandry in A. artemisiifolia because the species is monoecious and self-559 incompatible. In a simulation model of the asynchrony in timing of pollen and ovule 560 presentation, Medan and Bartoloni (1998) demonstrated that selection favours protandrous 561 genotypes when there is substantial overlap in male and female function; as they have the 562 greatest access to mates (both pollen and ovules), although flowering too early can be wasteful. 563

Several results support this balance of influences on protandry. We found that earlier onset to male function increased male reproductive success (especially for plants that had lower overall male allocation), but later flowering increased the probability of mating with diverse partners. Although we cannot identify the mechanisms here, we speculate that the potential for male mating success depends on competition for access to ovules from other individuals—more

569 ovules will be available later in the season, but there will also be greater pollen competition. 570 Plants benefit from early flowering by monopolizing siring opportunities on the few individuals 571 that have female flowers, but shifting male flowering to later when more plants are blooming 572 benefits relative mate diversity. Similarly, slightly delaying female function resulted in seed sired 573 by a more diverse pollen pool. Other mechanisms may be at play, for example if plants with 574 earlier flowering donated their pollen to more fecund mates, had greater pollen competitive 575 ability, or if their mates had declining fruit set (Brunet 1996, Weis and Kossler 2004, Austen and 576 Weis 2016b). The pattern in our results suggests that the staggered onset to male and female 577 flowering benefits both sex functions (in "harmony" between the sexes: Delph and Ashman 578 2006), while fecundity selection and sexual selection through male function are acting in 579 opposing directions on the start of male flowering.

580

581 Sex ratio selection and availability of ovules will eventually constrain the continued evolution of 582 dichogamy, demonstrated in a theoretical model by Sargent et al. (2006). An extended blooming 583 season alleviates some of the costs of skewed sex ratios-the earliest blooming plants sacrifice 584 some male mating opportunities that are lost due to an absence of available ovules, but the 585 wasted pollen represents a small fraction of overall investment. This scenario is exemplified by 586 A. artemisiifolia, where flower production increases, and under some conditions accelerates, 587 through time (Friedman and Barrett 2011a: see Figure 4), mitigating the costs of wasted mating 588 opportunities by early blooming flowers. Further, plants flower for 6 weeks or more, and the 589 average degree of dichogamy in our experiment was 4.2 days (range= -9 to 17 days; 9% of plants 590 were protogynous), so plants express both sex functions for the majority of their flowering. 591

592 The duration of overlap between male and female function, or their temporal separation, may be 593 an adaptive response to environmental stochasticity. Under conditions where resource 594 availability is unpredictable and resource acquisition varies during the flowering season, the best 595 allocation strategy should be in favor of the sex function with the higher return on investment 596 (Zhang 2006). Indeed, Ambrosia artemisiifolia experiences substantial plasticity in sex allocation 597 and in the degree and order of dichogamy (Paquin and Aarssen 2004; Friedman and Barrett 598 2011a). Here we have demonstrated that the male gain curve is linear or nearly so, and if we 599 assume that the female gain curve is mostly linear (Nakahara et al. 2018), then we would expect 600 a sharp transition between sex functions (Zhang et al. 2006). The gradual transition that we observe may be explained because male flowers are photosynthetic and contribute to available 601 602 resources (Bazzaz and Carlson 1979), and when reproductive resources are not a pool, but an 603 income, then the constraints on staminate flowering are altered (Burd and Head 1992). 604 Nonetheless, although the male gain curve is linear, there are likely diminishing marginal returns 605 of male investment through time due to the saturation of ovules.

606 Conclusion

607 Experimental tests of the shape of male gain curves and factors that affect it are scarce compared 608 to the amount of existing theoretical work. Our study is one of the few studies that empirically 609 test theoretical expectations of male gain curve in wind pollinated plants. In agreement with 610 predictions, we found a linear increase in fitness returns for increasing investment in male 611 function. Fitness through male function is likely limited by the availability of mates, and 612 increasing male investment results in proportional increases in the number of mating partners. In 613 wind-pollinated A. artemisiifolia there is likely strong selection on producing more pollen, with 614 the direct benefit increasing siring success and indirectly leading to more mating partners. While

615 early onset male flowering (particularly for lower male allocation plants) benefits male 616 reproductive success, later onset results in greater probability of mating with diverse partners 617 through both male and female function. Together this suggest an adaptive role for protandry to 618 adjust the pool of competing pollen for available ovules, and a balance between fecundity 619 selection and sexual selection through male function. Plants with lower male allocation might 620 experience particular benefits by flowering earlier and avoiding the competitive arena during full 621 population blooming, although a more explicit test of this prediction is necessary to rule out 622 alternative explanations.

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Table 1. Models of effects on male reproductive success in *Ambrosia artemiisifolia*. Results for A) model with factorial measure of male allocation (manipulation category), and B) model with continuous measure of male allocation (male inflorescence weight), using negative binomial GLMMs. Random effects (not shown) included the effects of source population and block. Male flowering time is abbreviated MFT, and Male inflorescence weight is abbreviated MIW. Bold *P*-values indicate significant effects.

	Term Condition	df	χ^2	<i>P</i> -value
A)	Allocation category	3	9.03	<0.05
	Male flowering time	1	9.34	<0.001
	Plant width	1	4.44	<0.05
	Edge	1	5.52	<0.05
	Allocation x MFT	3	9.46	<0.05
B)	Male inflorescence weight	1	6.67	<0.01
	Male flowering time	1	13.04	<0.001
	Plant width	1	5.99	<0.05
	Edge	1	5.62	<0.05
	MIW x MFT	1	7.23	<0.01

Table 2. Models of effects on proportional mate diversity in *Ambrosia artemiisifolia*. Results for (A) male mate diversity model with factorial measure of male allocation, (B) male mate diversity model with continuous measure of male allocation (male inflorescence weight), and (C) female mate diversity. Models in A) and B) used a binomial distribution weighted by the number of seeds sired per individual, model C) used a poisson distribution and an offset parameter of the number of seeds genotyped per individual. Random effects (not shown) in all models included the effects of source population and block. Bold *P*-values indicate significant effects.

	Term Condition	df	χ^2	<i>P</i> -value
A)	Allocation category	3	0.78	0.85
	Male flowering time	1	9.37	<0.01
	Edge	1	0.03	0.86
B)	Male inflorescence weight	1	0.01	0.91
	Male flowering time	1	8.96	<0.01
	Edge	1	0.09	0.76
C)	Allocation category	1	1.08	0.78
	Female flowering time	1	8.93	<0.01
	Germination probability	1	1.59	0.21

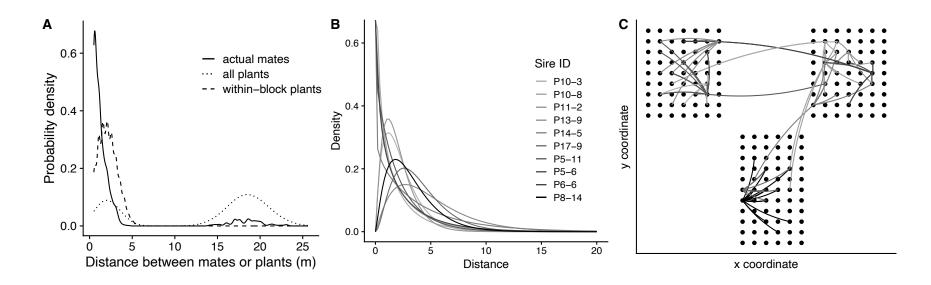
Figure 1. (A) The frequency distributions of interplant and intermate distances of *Ambrosia artemiisfolia* plants in experimental arrays. The solid line represents the probability density distribution of distance between mates in our progeny assays, while the dotted and dashed lines represent the probability density distributions of the distance between all plants in the experiment (dotted line) and distances between plants within a block (dashed line). (B) Modelled Weibull distribution of the dispersal kernel for a random subset of 10 experimental plants. (C) Distribution of 192 plants in experimental arrays (black dots) with the curves showing the trajectory of pollen to reach the known mates for the same random subset of 10 experimental plants. Note that the physical distance between the three blocks has been compressed for ease of figure presentation.

Figure 2. Influences on the number of seeds sired (male reproductive success) in *Ambrosia artemiisfolia* plants, including (A) treatment effects of four experimentally manipulated categories of male allocation, (B) male inflorescence weight, and (C) interaction between male allocation category and the julian day of the start of male flowering. Panel B shows the relation described by the power function regression, $y=ax^b$, with b=0.85. All results represent model-adjusted and back-transformed values from ln estimates. See Table 1 for statistical details.

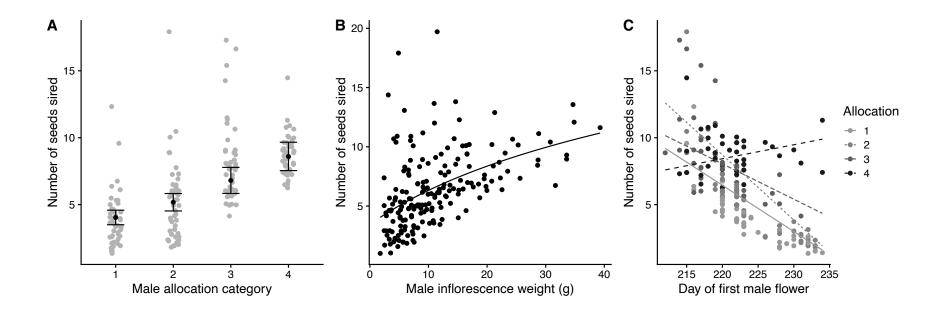
Figure 3. Male-specific Bateman gradient in *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* in experimental array conditions. The equation of best fit line is: $y=0.71x+0.12x^2-0.1$, see text for statistical details.

Figure 4. Effect of the Julian day of the start of (A) male flowering time and (B) female flowering time on male and female mate diversity (number of unique mating partners through female function), respectively, in *Ambrosia artemiisfolia* plants. Results represent model-adjusted and back-transformed values from ln estimates. See Table 2 for statistical details.

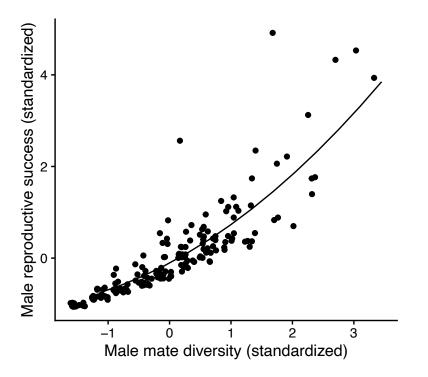




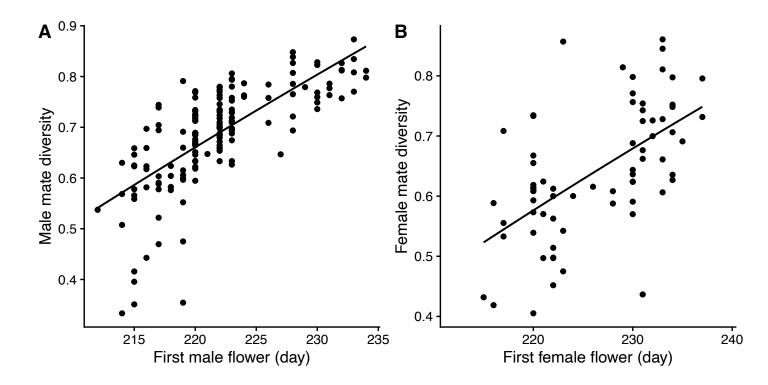












Supplementary Materials

Figure S1. Effects of the categorical experimental treatment of male flower manipulation on mean (\pm S.E.) male inflorescence weight in experimental *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* plants. Raw data are plotted, and means associated with different lowercase letters differed significantly.

Figure S2. Effects of the categorical experimental treatment of male flower manipulation on mean (\pm S.E.) A) plant height, and B) plant width, in experimental *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* plants. Raw data are plotted, and means associated with different lowercase letters differed significantly.

Figure S3. Influence of plant width (cm) on the number of seeds sired (male reproductive success) in *Ambrosia artemiisfolia* plants. Results represent model-adjusted and back-transformed values from ln estimates. See Table 1 for statistical details.



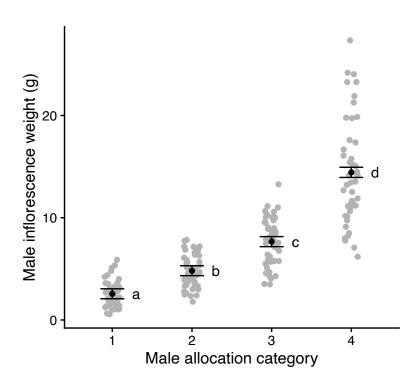


Figure S2

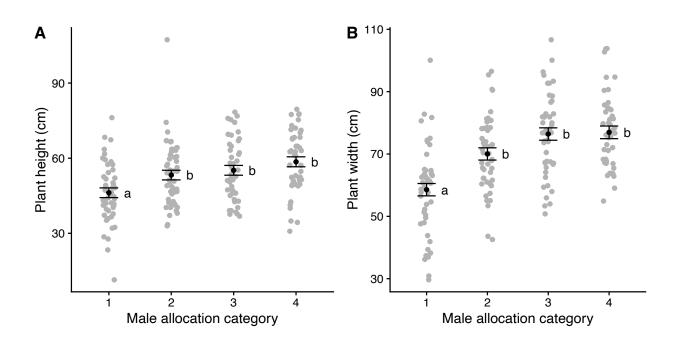


Figure S3

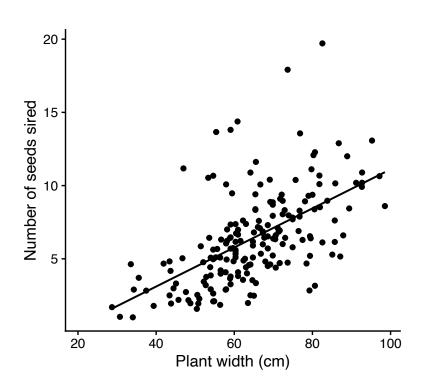


Table S1. Characteristics of the seven microsatellite loci used for paternity analysis. GenBank Accession, number of alleles, expected heterozygosity (H_E), observed heterozygosity (H_O), and PCR conditions for amplification are provided. All PCR reactions included a final volume of 10µl containing approximately 10-20ng of genomic DNA, 2µl of 5X Taq buffer, 0.5µl of 25mM MgCl₂, 1µl of 0.25mM of each dNTP, 0.1µl of 10µM of each forward and reverse primers and 0.5U of Taq Polymerase.

Locus	GenBank Accession	Number of alleles	H _E	Ho	PCR Profile	
Amb15	AY849309	16	0.90	0.64	95°C for 5m; 40 cycles of: 95°C for 30s,	
Amb82	AY849312	28	0.92	0.73	50°C for 30s; 65 °C for 4m; 72°C for 10m	
Ambart09	FJ595151	12	0.88	0.67		
Ambart18	FJ595153	28	0.91	0.51	95°C for 5m; 40 cycles of: 95°C for 30s,	
Ambart21	FJ595154	21	0.90	0.62	52°C for 30s; 65 °C for 4m; 72°C for 10m	
Ambart27	FJ595156	32	0.91	0.87		
Amb30	AY849311	16	0.84	0.67	95°C for 5m; 40 cycles of: 95°C for 30s, 51°C for 30s; 72 °C for 30s; 72°C for 10m	