The Bamboo Project Gusovius

An educational project to overcome xenophobia and build media literacy

The bamboo project Gusovius provides crucial clues to the main cause of insect mortality.

Written by

Sven Gusovius and Eric Gusovius

Facts versus fake news

Preservation of biodiversity and culture in urban areas

The Bamboo Project Gusovius:

An educational project to overcome xenophobia and build media literacy.

On the basis of the threat of ecocide, the demanded destruction of non-native plant life, it is shown what danger scientists, non-governmental organizations and the media pose when they spread untruths.

The bamboo project Gusovius provides crucial clues to the main cause of insect mortality.

The observations made are more than worrying.

Content

Spreading misinformation: Non-native plants are said to be one of the main causes of insect mortality

In addition to the threat of climate change, the loss of biodiversity is currently perceived as an existential threat. At the latest since the publication of the Krefeld study, which found a decline in the insect population of about 75%, the topic of insect mortality has been present in many media.

The importance of private gardens is often pointed out, which in total have about the same area as all nature reserves.

The demand of many non-governmental organisations with regard to private gardens, but also with regard to public green spaces, is that non-native plants should be removed and replaced by native ones.

According to this view, only native plants provide a habitat for native insects, as co-evolution has taken place over thousands of years.

A German wild bee would need a German flower and German pollen. A German butterfly would only need German plants as a food plant for its caterpillar stage.

This assumption is supported by numerous nature conservation organizations as well as by the funded science.

In general, non-native plants are considered potentially invasive and ecologically worthless.

This view is reflected in legal regulations. Development plans increasingly prohibit non-native plants, and the German Association of Cities is calling for the removal of non-native plants and the enactment of corresponding regulations, as well as a corresponding education offensive.

At the state level, the demand for exclusively native planting is becoming more frequent.

Even at the level of the European Union, non-native plants are considered potentially invasive and ecologically worthless. Here, too, this perspective is in danger of being adopted in legal regulations.

The principle applies: biodiversity is only possible with native plants. Non-native plants would be ecologically worthless and promote insect mortality.

In the appendix you will find examples and explanations of the specialization of wild bees and caterpillars that refute the above statements:

"Another example: According to Westrich, a bee expert, the bluebell scissor bee also uses the pollen of the balloon flower (native to Northeast Asia) and the Sarmatian bellflower (native to the Caucasus region)."

In addition, the annex reports on the invasiveness of non-native plants: *"The results presented with this BfN script clearly show that most of the more than 2,400 alien vascular plant species living in the wild in Germany do not pose a problem from the point of view of nature conservation."*

The Insect Study Gusovius: Uncovering the Falsehoods and Crucial Clues to the Main Cause of Insect Mortality

For more than six years, the insect life on non-native plants was documented, mainly in a private garden of about 600 square meters. The insects were usually observed and photographed / filmed several times a day at different times of the day and night, usually for hours. Thousands of hours of work went into the project.
The population of insects was recorded over all seasons.

The observations of the diversity of insect life on non-native plants refute the claim that they are ecologically worthless.
Non-native plants are not ecologically unworthy of life, but mostly hotspots of biodiversity. The insect study shows the scientific reality.

This scientific reality has been documented in the form of several hundred thousand photographs and thousands of films.

Our observations provide crucial clues to the main cause of insect mortality, we estimate that about 95% of biodiversity loss is due to this cause. The observations made are more than worrying.

Media analysis

An extremely extensive media analysis documents the numerous campaigns that have been and are being carried out against non-native plants. It also analyses how these campaigns influence politics and ultimately legislation.

The travelling exhibition

In the prepared travelling exhibition, the media world and the world of scientific reality are presented side by side. On the one hand, this is done through quotations from the media and, on the other hand, through large-format posters of the images of the scientific documentation.

On the one hand, the viewer gains an insight into the fascinating life of insects on non-native plants, and on the other hand, his media competence grows enormously through the fact that he has to recognize how much untruth is being spread.

The exhibition also encourages curiosity to do one's own research and to critically question what the media disseminates.

The movie

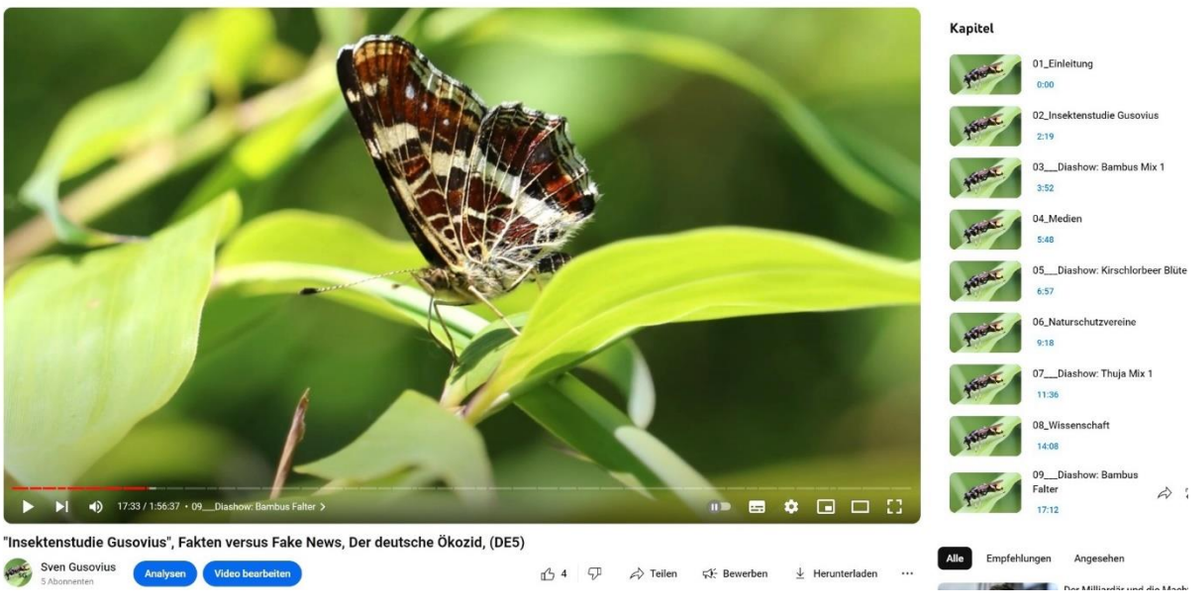
In a unique film, the bamboo project is processed. The result is a summary of the media analysis in combination with wonderful images of insects living on non-native plants.

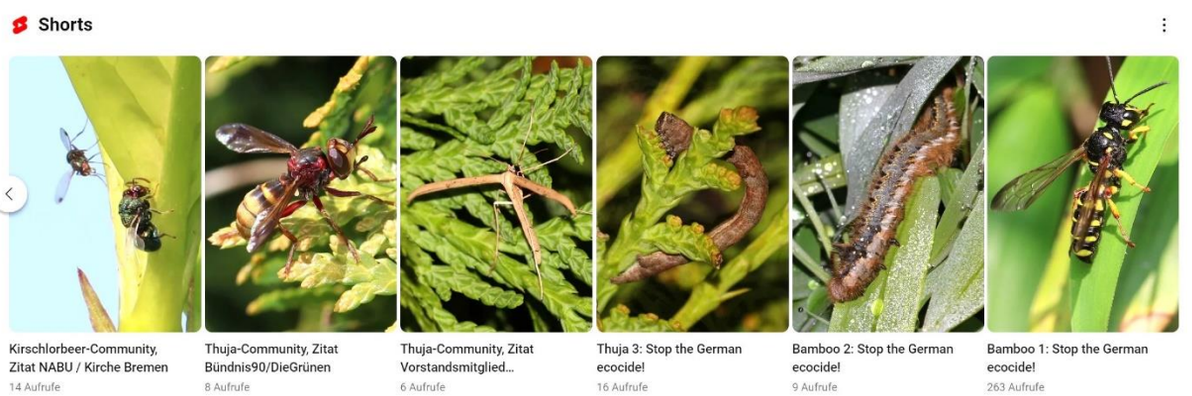
This makes it possible to understand how untruths about non-native plants are spread and what the consequences are.

Furthermore, the current political and social context of nature conservation is discussed.

The film can be watched on Youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/@SvenGusovius





The Bamboo Park

Bamboo, along with cherry laurel, thuja and forsythia, is one of the most rejected or downright hated plants by many "conservationists", as the epitome of the worthless foreign. Expressions such as "worthless than a concrete wall", "ecological plague", "plastic plant", "crime against nature" are widespread in nature conservation circles and even find their way into politics and, subsequently, legislation.

By chance, the bamboo Fargesia nitida flowered and sowed itself in the private garden of Gusovius. Numerous seedlings could be obtained. This plant only blooms at intervals of about 120 years and this worldwide. After flowering, the mother plant dies.

The numerous seedlings represent a unique treasure of biodiversity. They are also a very special **cultural heritage of the region**. Exactly at the place where the bamboo was sown, **Rudolf Carsten** had made his first sowing attempts for wheat. For a time, he was the **most successful grain breeder in Germany** with a market share of about 90 percent.

Ernst Pagels **was also born in the neighbourhood** . He was to become **one of the most successful perennial breeders in Germany**, and also bred miscanthus and bamboo.

The travelling exhibition can only be an introduction to overcoming xenophobia in the field of the plant world. It is equally important that people can experience the value of foreign plants with all their senses.

Therefore, a bamboo park is planned. This is to be supplemented with numerous non-native plants and preserved structures that are conducive to insects. Visitors can experience the diverse insect life on site.

The xenophobic "science" is invited for further education.

Insect hotels can also be planted.

It is time for an educational offensive that conveys to people the value of non-native plants.

The Bamboo Park becomes a source of knowledge for the whole of Europe.

Bamboo Park:

The components of the bamboo project Gusovius

The bamboo project Gusovius consists of the following components:

- The Insect Study Gusovius
- The Media Research
- The Travelling Exhibition
- The Bamboo Park

What are the benefits of the bamboo project?

For the owners of the gardens:

- They no longer have to be called "criminals" when cultivating foreign plants.
- They are no longer socially stigmatized and blamed for the decline in biodiversity. You can defend yourself against accusations.
- You can continue to participate in and enjoy a cosmopolitan garden culture that has grown over centuries.
- You retain an intimate garden area. (In addition to "classic" garden inspections, new methods are being tested, such as flying over gardens with drones. There is a threat of absolute surveillance and loss of privacy.)
- The right to personal property is preserved. It is not "public interest before self-interest" that applies, a constructed biodiversity emergency caused by non-native plants is not entitled to override the property rights of citizens.
- With about 17 million private gardens, a hypothetical cost estimate of 2,000 euros for clearing or destroying the foreign plants and for a replacement planting would result in costs of about 34 billion euros.

For municipalities

Municipalities do not have to remove all foreign plants. The cost savings are also likely to be in the region of many billions of euros.

For Europe

A Europe that advertises the "Green Deal" and bans and has non-native plants removed on the basis of falsehoods will lose considerable international prestige. This must be prevented.

How does a country want to attract foreign skilled workers, a country where media campaigns are carried out against foreign plants and their owners?

For Science

Scientific evidence can lead to **fundamental rights** being restricted. It is often said "follow the science" or "science is settled", the scientific discourse is made more difficult, if not even prevented. Anyone who questions the statements of scientists is in danger of **being accused of** science denial.

In addition, more and more scientists and scientific institutions see themselves in the role of "instruction-givers" to politicians.

The bamboo project shows this alarming development in a way that is comprehensible to everyone. Only a neutral, open-ended, apolitical science can be described as such. Science must be allowed to be questioned.

Scientists who claim that "non-native plant species do not help insects!" show their ignorance or bias. Germany as a centre of science is in danger of suffering considerable damage.

For democracy

The bamboo project illustrates the responsibility of the media. If they disseminate unchecked content that does not correspond to scientific facts, there is a risk of dangerous influence on public opinion and politics.

This gives lobby organisations enormous power, which extends into legislation.

The bamboo project shows that media literacy is an indispensable key competence for the preservation of democracy.

Falsehoods influence legislation. The freedom of all of us is threatened when laws and regulations are enacted on the basis of false information.

The cultural aspect

A garden culture that has grown over centuries is in danger of being extinguished.
Quote from the "Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions" UN General Conference in Paris in 2005:

'Recognising the need to take measures to protect the diversity of cultural expressions, including their content, in particular in situations where cultural expressions are likely to be at risk of extinction or serious harm;'

Recently, there have been many activities in the field of coming to terms with the colonial past and National Socialism. So far, it has been ignored that German nature conservation also has its roots in the Third Reich. A corresponding reappraisal under the aspect of whether thought patterns from this period are the cause of the current botanical xenophobia would be welcome.

The main cause of insect mortality

As part of the bamboo project, the insect population in the home garden was observed and photographed / filmed for more than six years, mostly daily and often for several hours.

Our observations provide crucial clues to the main cause of insect mortality, we estimate that about 95% of biodiversity loss is due to this cause.

The observations made are more than worrying.

The bamboo project in pictures

Each seed has a unique life plan. Bamboo for a Europe of diversity and tolerance.


It's time for a real grassroots movement against racism in horticulture.
Bamboo for diversity.


Let's do away with hatred and prejudice. For racism-free science and education.
Happy bamboo. Bamboo for diversity.

Images of insects on non-native plants

The Bamboo Community:

Zooming into the wonderful world of the bamboo community:

The Thuja Community:

Quotes from the media:

"Throwing exotic plants out of the gardens"
"Criticism of trendy plants: bamboo, forsythia & Co. should be banned"
"That's why you should remove plants like cherry laurel and bamboo from the garden as soon as possible"

"Cherry laurel or bamboo in the garden? Why an expert warns against it"
"Bamboo, cherry laurel and geraniums: better banish them from the garden"

"PROFESSIONALS WARN: Why you should urgently remove plants such as bamboo or cherry laurel from your garden"

"CRIMES AGAINST NATURE: POISON FOR YOUR GARDEN, WHY BAMBOO AND CHERRY LAUREL SHOULD BE BANNED"

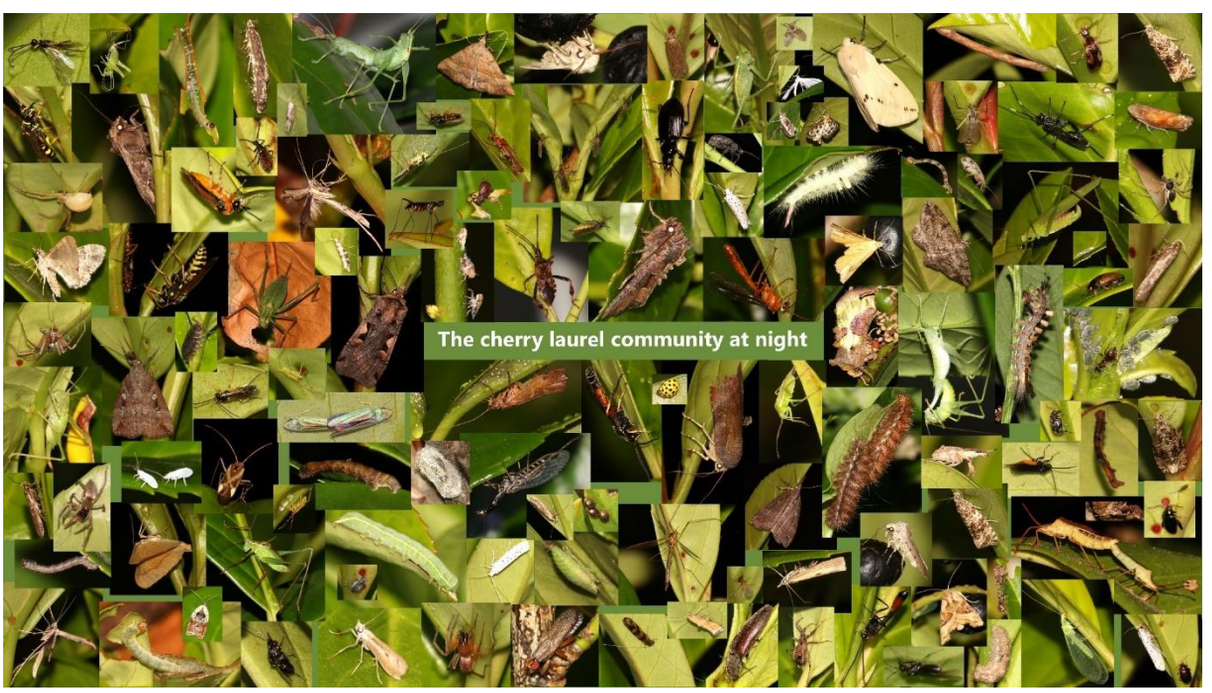
"Bushes such as the widespread cherry laurel or exotic grasses and bamboo drive animals out of the garden – neither insects nor birds can find food on such plants. "

"The Plague in the Neighbor's Garden"
"Environmentally harmful plants that are better avoided"

""Clear everything!" Conservationists want to ban thuja, rhododendron and cherry laurel from gardens"

Here is the cherry laurel community during the day:

Here is the cherry laurel community at night:



Quotes from science

Leading entomologist and chairman of the Competence Centre for Biodiversity:
"Thuja plants, cherry laurel and other foreign species ... are ecologically completely worthless for native insects."

"The popular cherry laurel or thuja hedges may provide privacy for humans – but they are almost as interesting for nature as a plastic palm tree."

"And another psychopath garden! You might as well plant a plastic hedge there, it doesn't do anything to live in."

Science Magazine Spektrum.de:
"Exotic ornamental trees also find many enthusiasts, but also offer neither habitat nor food to native animals."

"But action must be taken now.
... (the scientist) is of the opinion that our native animals have nothing to do with thuja, cherry laurel and co. They offer neither food nor nesting sites."

"Non-native plants should be removed..." (not "just" exotic!)

"Exotic plants may look good, but they are useless for our native species."

... (the scientist) advised never to plant cherry laurel because it produces toxic prussic acid: "A concrete wall makes even more sense, because at least mosses will grow on it at some point."

Wikipedia:
"For native insects, laurel cherries are largely worthless due to their toxicity."

Lecture Scientists 4 Future: "Plant only native plant species, because non-native plant species do not help insects!"

Senckenberg Society: "Science must become loud and political! So that the facts are finally heard..."

Appendix

Background in natural sciences

On the specialization of wild bees

Again and again it is claimed in the media that wild bees, for example, are specialized in native plants, they cannot do anything with non-native plants.

This is nonsense. Wild bees are divided into generalists and specialists based on their pollen collection behaviour. About a third of nest-building wild bees are pollen specialists. This specialization is also known as oligolecty. Often, however, it is not possible to clearly assign generalist / specialist.

However, this does not mean that oligolectic bees rely exclusively on pollen from native plants. Rather, they specialize in the pollen of certain plants. According to Paul Westrich, a wild bee expert:

Strictly oligolectic: pollen from one or more species of the same plant genus

Oligolectic: Pollen from two to several plant genera belonging to a family, a subfamily or a tribe.

The term "genus" should not be confused with the term "native".

To illustrate this, the pea mortar bee is an example. A bee that specializes in Fabaceae (Legume Family). In addition to native plants, it also uses, for example, the fire bean, which was introduced from South America in the 17th century, as a pollen supplier. (Paul Westrich, wild bee expert)

It is the characteristics (genus, family) of the plant that are decisive, not its regional origin. To put it bluntly: **plant genera are often "citizens of the world".**

Another example: According to Westrich, the bluebell scissor bee (Chelostoma rapunculi) also uses the pollen of the balloon flower (Platycodon grandiflorus, native to Northeast Asia) and the Sarmatian bellflower (Campanula sarmatica, native to the Caucasus region).

In general, one should be careful with sweeping judgments regarding the "value" of plants. For example, Westrich (https://www.wildbienen.info) was able to observe five different wild bees collecting pollen on the cherry laurel, while only one on the native elderberry. In his experience, elderberry is very rarely used as a pollen source, so there are usually no wild bees on the inflorescences.

He was able to make similar observations on the flowers of the local common spindle tree. Only one species of wild bee was once seen collecting pollen.

On the native hornbeam, only one species of wild bee was detected during pollen collection, on the native mountain ash only three, and on the beaver rose one.

The value of non-native plants for caterpillars

Similar observations can also be made with regard to the attractiveness of plants for caterpillars. Again and again it is claimed that non-native plants do not provide any food source for caterpillars. This, too, is nonsense.

In the Gusovius insect study, more than ten different caterpillars were detected on the cherry laurel, caterpillars with a great appetite. In a study from England, 19 caterpillars were detected on the non-native summer lilac.

If you believe the data of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation on the website floraweb, you will find, for example, the following number of caterpillars that live on native plants: common snowball: three, parson's cap: seven, sea buckthorn: seven, mountain elm: six, wild apple: four, Norway maple: three, ivy: five, German broom: three, wild pear: three, red currant: three.

Conservationists, on the other hand, like to cite the high number of caterpillars that live on sloes and pastures to justify the worthlessness of non-native plants. This is not correct.

Names straight out of the Wagner Festival

Nature gardeners rave about the native plants "viper's head", "field man's litter", "Regensburg dwarf broom", "spurge", "stinking hellebore", "fat meadow daisy", "yarrow" or "corn rade". However, these plants are also native to the Mediterranean, North Africa, and/or Central Asia. Often they are neophytes in other continents.

On the invasiveness of non-native plants:

From a publication of the German Horticultural Association, which was prepared in cooperation and coordination with the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) in 2008: Approximately 40 plants are considered invasive. About

150,000 taxa are in horticultural culture. This means that approximately 0.003% of plants used in horticultural culture are considered invasive.

These include, for example, the black pine and the potato rose, plants that are unlikely to have any negative effects when used in urban areas, as well as the robinia.

A blanket assessment of non-native species as invasive is completely unjustified.

Again and again, representatives of a wide variety of organizations, including the United Nations, try to present non-native plants as a threat to biodiversity, so to speak, to present non-native plants as CO2 in analogy to climate change. This has no scientific basis.

Non-native species usually represent an enrichment of the plant world, which was impoverished by the ice ages. They offer advantages not only for humans, but also for insects, especially since the object of this consideration is urban space.

Even for outdoor use, a blanket assessment of all non-native plants as invasive is not tenable.

Quotes from the publication "Nature conservation invasiveness assessments for non-native vascular plants living wild in Germany" of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN): "The results presented with this BfN script clearly show that most of the more than 2,400 alien vascular plant species living in the wild in Germany do not pose a problem from the point of view of nature conservation. ...

Our native flora of vascular plants comprises 3,207 indigenous and 226 long-naturalized species (archaeophytes) (BfN 2012)."

Of poisonous plants and crops

In order to damage the reputation of non-native plants, no one will shy away from anything:
For example, it is pointed out that cherry laurel was named "Poisonous Plant of the Year" in 2013.
This, of course, evokes the association among outsiders that many people have suffered harm from this plant, but this is not the case.
In 2022, the non-domestic potato was caught in the election,
in 2023, the non-native parsley.

It becomes clear how bold and misleading "of the year" campaigns can be.
A very small group of people achieve enormous reach with these campaign headlines and influence the perception of more than 84 million people. No one questions these campaigns.

Here is an excerpt of non-native crops:

Sunflower: origin North and Central America, party logo of the Greens,
Potato: Origin South America,
Tomato: Origin Central America,
Cultivated apple: Origin Kazakhstan, came via the Silk Road,
Sweet cherry: origin Turkey, from the 16th century in Germany,
Rapeseed: Origin Eastern Mediterranean,
Parsley: Origin North African Mediterranean countries,
Peppers: Origin Central and South America,
Onion: Origin probably Central Asia,
Fennel: Origin Egypt,
Mediterranean herbs and tropical fruits ...

Virtually all of the crops we use are non-native or have been heavily altered by breeding over time.
Non-native plants are a cultural enrichment.

Further information:

The homepage of the bamboo project:

https://www.der-deutsche-oekozid.de

https://www.german-ecocide.de/

The movie:

"Gusovius Insect Study", Facts versus Fake News, German Ecocide

The link to the Youtube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/@SvenGusovius

Petition:
"Stop the ban and destruction of non-native plants":
https://www.change.org/Insektenstudie_Gusovius

Appendix to the petition with extensive quotes:
https://www.german-ecocide.de/files/Petition_Appendix.pdf

With best regards

Dipl.-Ing. (FH) Sven Gusovius & Dipl.-Ing. (FH) Eric Gusovius

Last updated: 21.04.2024