



"Once the little flies have done their pollination thing, the stems of the tree become crowded with inky-black berries - loved by mousebirds, bulbuls and white-eyes."

Well those birds are welcome to their berries and I'll stick to pellets. At least they smell nice.



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FEATHER FOOTED FLY



BY STRIPES
THE ECO-CAT

Today I met a new human friend who knows about the eco-thing. He was quite surprised to meet an eco-cat but he soon started telling me about the birds and the trees. I think it's because humans assume I want to catch birds so they tell me how cute they are so that I won't want to catch them.

Duncan said he had just been walking near the sea and there was a very strange smell coming from some trees.

"I know", I said. "It smells like old dirty socks". I had also smelled them.

"That's the smell of the flowers of the milkwood trees", Duncan replied. "The tiny white flowers appear in summer and you can smell them from far away".

I wondered if anyone would want to visit those smelly flowers, because my humans had told me that flowers smell nice to attract pollinators.

"I could also see a whole swarm of swallows swooping low over the trees", said Duncan. "I went closer to see why they were doing that. And guess what, Stripes".

I really had no idea why swallows would want to fly low over milkwood trees, but I tried to look intelligent by staring at him without even a blink of an eye. I have met enough humans by now to know if I wait long enough they will tell me.

"All those swallow were whooshing up the air over the trees and do you know what happened?" I waited.

"They made thousands of little flies scatter up into the air. And as the flies flew up, the swallows swooped on them and ate them. The flies are tiny - much smaller than a house fly - but there were so many that the swallows had a jolly good lunch".

I wasn't sure I would like flies for lunch and made sure there were still pellets in my bowl.

"Those little flies love the smell of milkwood flowers. They have hairy legs so they are called feather-legged flies. When they visit the flowers some pollen gets stuck to the hairs on their legs and so the flies pollinate the milkwood flowers."

"And then what", I wondered.