

RUDERAL AREA

This is where the specialists grow and the heat-lovers play

Where there is gravel, sand and stones, ruderal areas are created. It gets hot and dry here in summer – nutrients are scarce. This is why only specialized pioneer plants can grow here. Plant growth is typically very sparse. However, there are insects that depend on these open patches of vegetation, such as grasshoppers. Although the bow-winged grasshopper is not very demanding in terms of food (it eats mainly grasses and leaves), it loves plenty of sun and warmth and lays its eggs in dry soil.

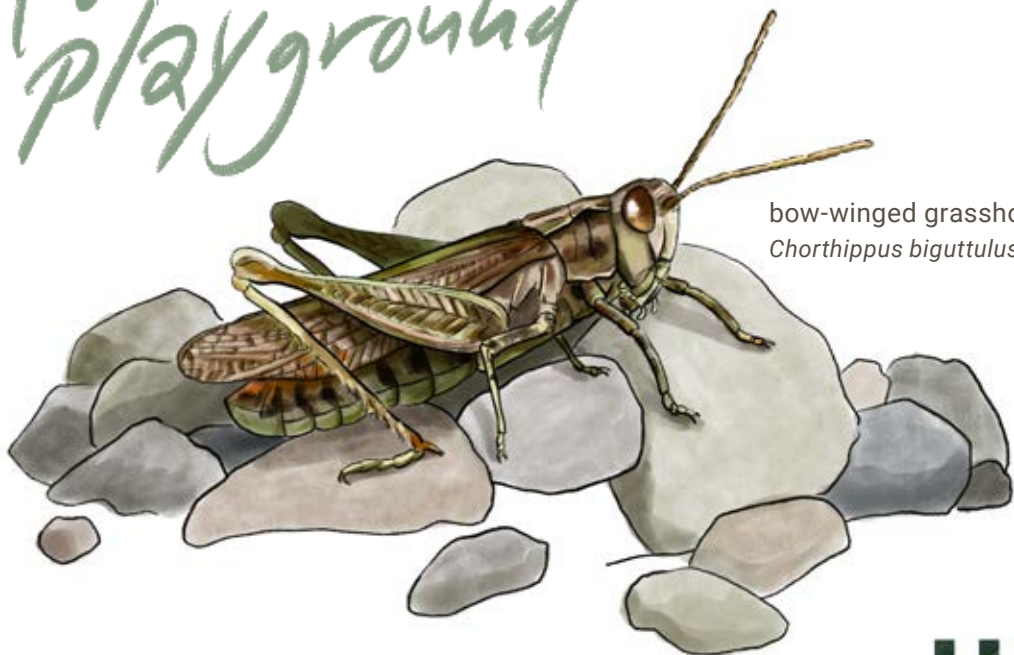
Everything changes

Ruderal areas change over the years and the longer they are left, the denser the vegetation becomes – some plants disappear, to be replaced by others.

It's getting tight for specialists

Naturally, ruderal areas can only be found on gravel banks along rivers, where they are rebuilt after every flood. But how many wild rivers without embankments do we still have in Switzerland? With the disappearance of these areas, the plants and animals that specialize in them will no longer find a home.

A summer playground



bow-winged grasshopper
Chorthippus biguttulus

drawing: Sonja Fierz