



From Flowers to Fruit

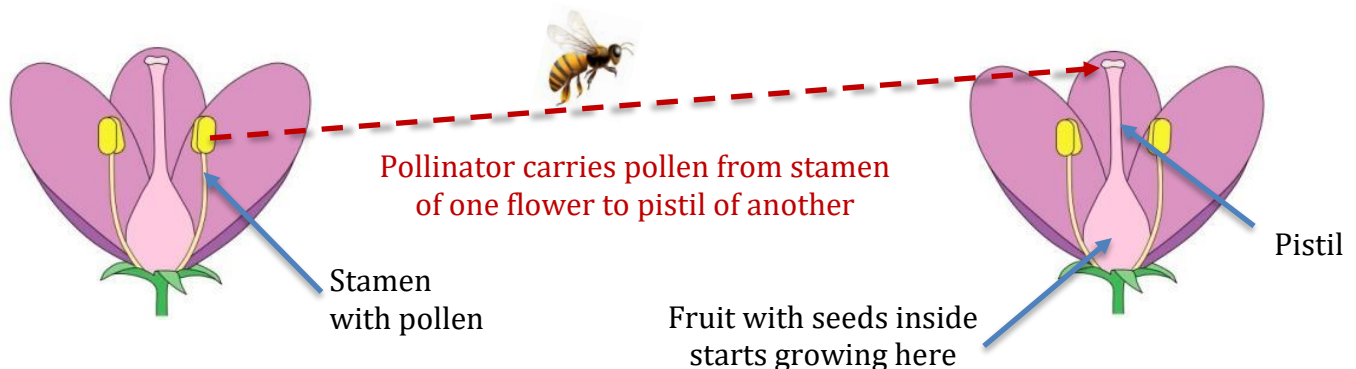
Learn about pollinators and how they help to turn flowers into the fruit we eat.



Did you know that all fruits begin with flowers?

- **It all starts when the plants bloom.**
The job of a flower is to make seeds so that a plant can **reproduce** or make new plants.
- **The flowers have a sweet liquid inside called nectar that attracts bees.**
Birds, bats, butterflies, and other insects are also attracted to nectar.
- **Pollen from the flowers sticks to the visiting bees.**
Animals that help to spread pollen are called **pollinators**. Pollen is a yellow powder that sticks to the hairs, feathers, and scales of animals feeding on nectar. Yes, some mammals and reptiles help with pollination too! Bees are the most important pollinators in Maryland. Other Maryland pollinators include butterflies, ants, beetles, flies, moths, wasps, and ruby-throated hummingbirds.
- **When the bees land on other flowers, some of the pollen falls off.**
Pollination is when pollen from the **stamen** of one flower is dropped onto the **pistil** of another flower of the same type.
- **Seeds will begin to grow where the pollen falls off.**
For seeds to grow, most plants must be **cross pollinated**. This means that the pollen from the stamen of a flower on one plant is dropped onto the pistil of a flower on a different plant. For cross pollination to occur, there must be two or more plants of the same type growing together.
- **Fruit is the name for the soft covering that forms around the seeds. Without pollinators, we would have no fruit to eat!**

Pollination Diagram



To watch a video showing how pollination works click [here](https://tinyurl.com/3qty2k54).
<https://tinyurl.com/3qty2k54>

To read more about how pollination works click [here](https://tinyurl.com/3c28qs6q).
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To read about pollinators and how to attract them to your garden click [here](https://tinyurl.com/2hzrshur).
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Pollination Demonstration

You will need:

- 2 copies of [flower pattern page](#)
- 2 pieces of soft colored chalk (one light color and one dark color work best)
- 1 cotton ball

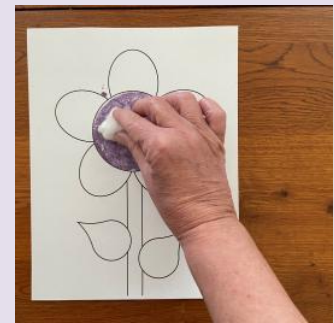
1. Color the center of each flower with a different color of soft chalk. Press firmly and don't remove any chalk dust. Imagine that the chalk dust is pollen.



2. Imagine that the cotton ball is a bee or other pollinator. Rub the bee on one of the flowers as it tries to get nectar. Is there chalk on the cotton ball? Imagine it is pollen on the bee.



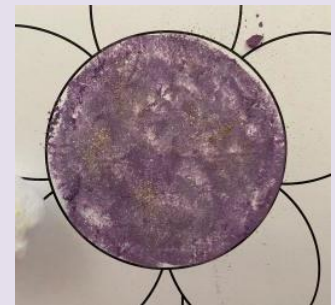
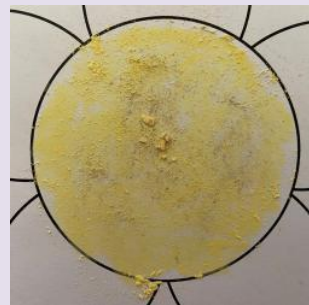
3. Rub the bee on the second flower as it tries to get more nectar.



4. Have the bee fly back and forth between the two flowers a few more times.



5. Look closely at the two flowers. Did the bee move pollen from the first flower (yellow) to the second flower (purple)? Is there purple pollen on the yellow flower?



This is how pollination works.
Now the flowers can make seeds and fruit!