

Introduction

WHAT IS A POLLINATOR?

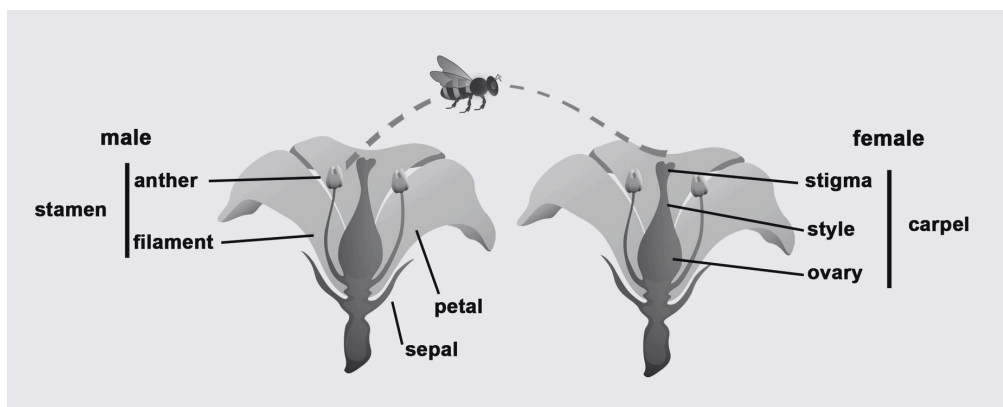
A pollinator is an animal and/or insect that pollinates flowers. In order to understand what a pollinator is, we must first understand what pollination is.



In the life cycle of most plants, seeds are how a plant reproduces, making offspring. You can find seeds inside of fruit and flowers. Have you ever seen a seed?



To make a seed, a flower must be pollinated. For a flower to be pollinated, a grain of pollen from the flower's anther must be moved to another flower's stigma. These are a plant's reproductive structures. Pollen can be moved between flowers found on the same plant, or from different plants of the same species.



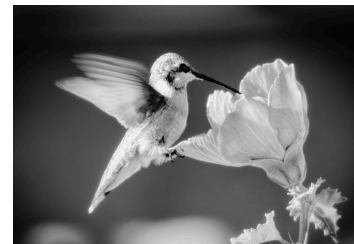
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Some pollen is light and easily blown through the air. Plants with light pollen are called wind-pollinated plants. Other plants have heavy, sticky pollen. This pollen moves from flower to flower by sticking to the bodies of animals. Plants with heavy, sticky pollen are called animal-pollinated plants.



Who is moving pollen from flower to flower?

Hummingbirds, bats, and insects such as bees, flies, and butterflies are just a few examples. These animals eat nectar and/or pollen, and must come in close contact with the anthers and stigmas inside of flowers to feed. Pollen sticks to their bodies as they eat and the pollen travels with the pollinator from flower to flower. It is important to note that pollinators do not move pollen on purpose! Flowers offer the sweet reward of nectar to encourage animals to come close enough to touch their anthers and stigmas and retrieve pollen.



What type of pollinators do you think are local to your area?
