Pollinator Match Activity

Smithsonian Gardens

Description:
Learn to identify colors while engaging with the beauty of nature in this hands-on activity for young learners! Best for ages 3+.

Outcomes
After completing Pollinator Match, participants will be better able to recognize colors and understand that colors attract animals in the natural world.

Objectives
During this activity, students will

- Identify different pollinators
- Learn that plants use color as a signal to attract different pollinators
- Discover how plants and pollinators support each other
- Practice their observation skills

Materials

- Scissors (for instructor use)
- Pollinator Pieces
- My Pollinator Garden worksheet
- Crayons or other coloring supplies

Set-Up

1. Print one copy of the Pollinator Pieces and one copy of the My Pollinator Garden worksheet for each young learner or small group, and one for demonstration purposes.
2. Cut out pollinator images using scissors.

Steps

1. Provide each learner or small group with one My Pollinator Garden worksheet and one set of Pollinator Pieces images.
2. Optional: Students can color the pollinator images.
3. Name the different pollinators together.
4. Use the language in the Teacher Instructions to introduce the idea that different pollinators are attracted to flowers of different colors.
5. Read the different Pollinator Prompts and encourage each learner or small group to match the pollinator to a flower on their My Pollinator Garden worksheet.
6. Create your own picture of a flower.

Pollinator Match - Teacher Instructions

Just like you and me, our animal friends need to eat! Some animals, called pollinators, find their food inside of flowers. When pollinators visit flowers, their bodies get covered in a substance called pollen. When they visit other flowers, they drop off the pollen that is on their bodies, and this lets the flowers make seeds and fruits!

Flowers come in many different colors. Do you have a favorite color? Just like you, pollinators are drawn to some colors more than others, and this helps them decide which flowers to visit when they get hungry. Today, we are going to help six of our pollinator friends find some of their favorite flowers so they can eat and help new flowers grow!

Pollinator Prompts: Let's review our pollinator friends. We have a bee, a hummingbird, a moth, a beetle, a butterfly, and a fly. Have you ever seen any of these pollinators before?

- Bees like yellow flowers! Can you help the bee find a yellow flower?
- Moths like white flowers! Can you help the moth find a white flower?
- Flies like dark purple flowers! Can you help the fly find a dark purple flower?
- Butterflies like yellow flowers! Can you help the butterfly find a yellow flower?
- Beetles like white flowers! Can you help the beetle find a white flower?
- Hummingbirds like red flowers! Can you help the hummingbird find a red flower?
- Moths also like pink flowers! Can you help the moth find a pink flower?
- Bees also like blue flowers! Can you help the bee find a blue flower?

Background Information

Many pollinators are attracted to a variety of plants in multiple colors. This list has been edited down to one or two flower colors per pollinator for simplicity. The shape and smell of flowers also play a role in attracting pollinators.

To learn more about pollinator preferences and why pollinators matter, check out the pollinator profiles from Smithsonian Gardens: The Why, What, When, Where, Who, How of Pollination.

Create

Invite students to imagine they are pollinators and draw flowers they would like to visit.

A monarch butterfly visits a *Helianthus* flower in search of nectar to eat. *Smithsonian Gardens*

Flower Guide

Each of the plants featured in this activity are native to the United States and can found in gardens across the Smithsonian!

Helianthus decapetalus (sunflower)

Phlox paniculata (phlox)

Magnolia grandiflora (magnolia)

Mertensia virginica (Virginia bluebells)

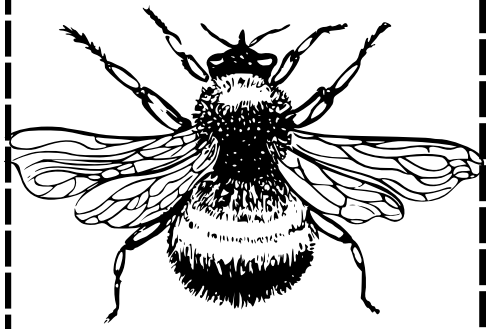
Aquilegia canadensis (red columbine)

Asimina triloba (pawpaw)

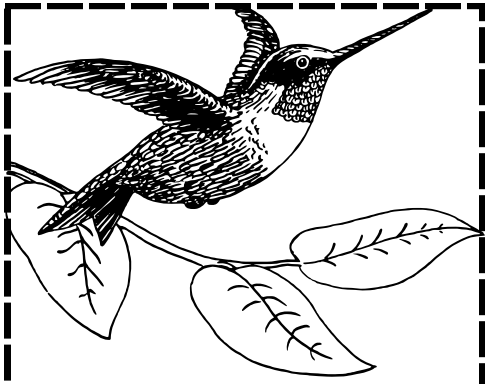
Flower images courtesy of Smithsonian Gardens

Pollinator Pieces

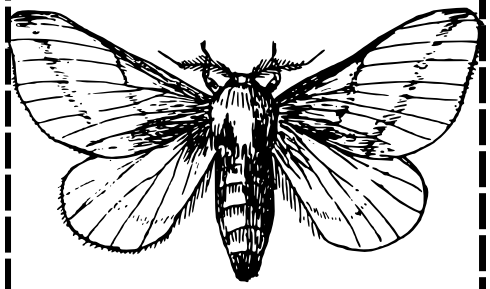
Instructions: Cut out each pollinator along the dotted lines.



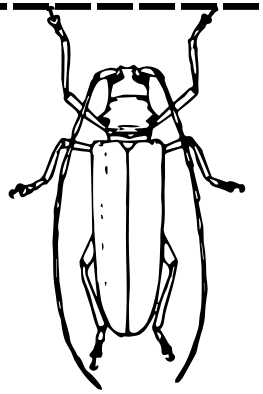
bee



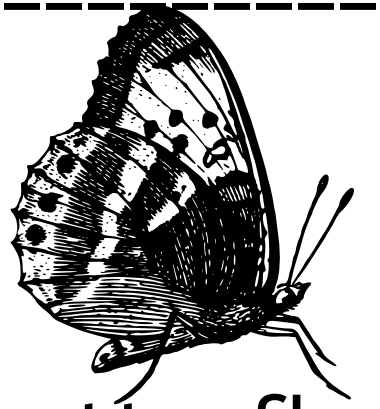
hummingbird



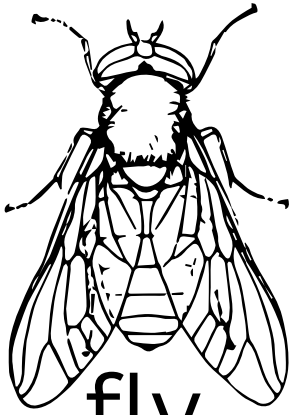
moth

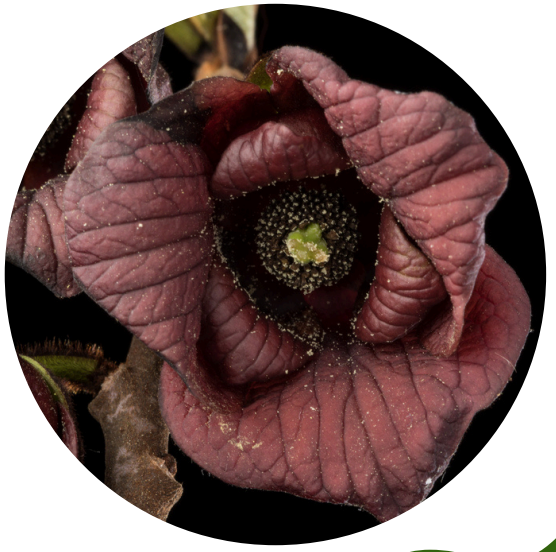


beetle



butterfly



fly

My Pollinator Garden