

# Plant pollination

## The worker bee story



Worker bees do an excellent job of assisting plant pollination. The bees are attracted to flowering plants by their brightly coloured petals and the sweet smell of the valuable foods that the flowers contain.

The first food is **pollen**, a dusty substance that is rich in protein. The pollen is found on the ends of tiny stalks clustered around the centre of the flower. These are called **stamens**. They are the male part of the plant. The worker bee scoops some of the pollen into tiny sacks behind its rear legs. This can be very messy and lots of pollen sticks to the bee's body.

The other food that the honey bee searches for is **nectar**. This sweet-smelling sugary liquid is produced deep inside the flower. To reach the nectar, the bee has to push down past the stamens and past another important stalk called the **stigma**. This is the female part of the plant. As it pushes past the stamens, more pollen sticks to the bee's body.

When the bee has finished drinking the nectar, it flies off to other flowers to collect more food. Pollen from its body brushes onto the stigma of these flowers. This transfer of pollen is called **pollination**. If pollination is successful, seeds could begin to develop in the **ovary** at the bottom of the flower.

Finally the bee goes back to its hive. It shares the pollen with the other bees in the hive and spits out some of the nectar. The bees use this to make honey.

### What to do

Read the passage about worker bees and complete the activities below.

1. Label the stamen, stigma, ovary and petals on the diagram on the right.
2. Draw tiny yellow dots on the stamen, the bee's back legs and body. This is pollen.
3. Draw an arrow to where the bee finds nectar. Label your arrow *nectar*.
4. Which part of the flower attracts bees and other insects?

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5. Why do bees collect pollen and nectar?

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6. Where on the bee's body does the pollen go?

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7. What may happen when the pollen from one flower is brushed, by the bee, onto the stigma of another similar flower?

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