

Cotton Ball Pollination

What do chocolate, ketchup, and jack-o-lanterns have in common? None of them would exist without pollinators! Pollen is the yellow powdery stuff found in the center of a flower. Flowers need to share their pollen with other flowers, but they cannot do it alone!



Pollinators are animals that help plants spread their pollen by carrying it from one flower to another. Bees, for example, are very important pollinators that spread pollen around just by landing on many flowers in a row.

Materials:

- Paper
- Cotton Ball
- Multiple Colors of Chalk
- Coloring Supplies

Procedure:

1. Draw a few flowers on your piece of paper. You can draw and color your flower however you like, as long as you leave a large blank center.
2. Color the center of each flower with chalk. Be sure to use a different color of chalk for each flower.
3. Use your cotton ball as a bee flying from flower to flower! Rub it against each of the chalky flower centers you created.
4. Notice how your cotton ball looked before, during, and after its pollination journey. What has changed? How do you think a bee's body is similar to the cotton ball and how does that help it pollinate?



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What's happening? As the cotton ball moves from flower to flower, it picks up some of the chalk dust, which then falls off as it visits another flower. The same thing happens as pollinators drink the sweet nectar in the center of a flower. Pollen sticks to their fuzzy legs and some of it falls off when traveling to another flower to find more food!



As you can see, pollinators are essential to our environment! Bees may seem scary, but they help make a lot of the food we enjoy every day. That's why it's important to be kind to bees and other pollinators like bats, moths, beetles, birds, and butterflies.



DID YOU KNOW?

An **anthecologist** is someone who studies pollination. They study how pollination works and the relationship between flowers and their pollinators! If you liked exploring this activity, maybe anthecology is for you!