

LIFE IN THE FLOWERS

Every spring the sun returns and the flowers bloom. They are soon visited by small animals called pollinators. Pollinators fly from flower to flower, dusting flowers with pollen they pick up from each flower they visit. See if you can spot some pollinators buzzing around.



Photo Credit: CC Martin LaBar



Photo Credit: Flickr- S. Rae



Photo Credit: Jennifer Batty

Bumblebees - These fuzzy, large bees can range between 1 – 3 cm and come in a combination of colours including black, yellow, orange and red. Bumblebees are often loud when flying, and ‘bumble’ through the air. They distinctively carry pollen in baskets on the sides of their legs.

Mining Bees - Usually small and black, and have slightly more ‘pointy’ abdomens than other kinds of bees. Mining bees build their nests in the ground. They distinctively carry their pollen all along their hind legs like yellow pants unlike other groups that have clear pollen balls.

Hairy Belly Bees - These bees are stout shaped bees around 0.5 – 1.5 cm in length, and come striped, or in metallic blue or green. The distinctively carry pollen on the underside of their abdomens, giving them the name “Hairy Belly”.



Photo Credit: Wikicommons, Trounce

Wasps - Wasps are insect predators, but also visit flowers and act as pollinators. Wasps are usually long and thin, ranging in size from 0.5 – 2.5 cm. They are usually black and yellow, and have little to no hair because they are not collecting pollen. Yellowjackets and hornets are both types of wasps.



Photo Credit: Erin Udal

Honeybees - Are yellowish-orange with black stripes and are about 1 cm in length. They are unique because they live in large hives and produce honey. They also carry pollen in baskets on their sides of their legs.



Photo Credit: Erin Udal



Photo Credit: Wikicommons



Photo Credit: Wikicommons



Flies - Often mimic looking like bees, so be extra watchful for their features. Flies do not carry pollen on their legs. They have two wings, whereas bees have four, and they lack the antennae that bees have. They fly in more zippy, fast patterns than bees. Another identifying feature of flies is their eyes, which span across their head like ski-goggles. Flies are important pollinators of many flowers.

Butterflies - Have wide and elaborate wings and long antennae. You might see butterflies on flowers sucking nectar with their long tube-like tongues. Most butterflies do not appear until summer and you are less likely to see them in your survey compared to other pollinators.

Beetles - May also be spotted inside of flowers. Beetles sometimes eat pollen, getting grains on themselves before visiting other flowers, making them pollinators. Beetles range greatly in size but, are typically "bullet shaped" and black or metallic.

Ants - Also shelter in flowers and drink nectar from flowers. Ants seen in flowers will typically be black, shiny and skinny insects without wings.



Ladybugs are beetles.



This project has been supported by:



TD Friends of the Environment Foundation



NatureKids BC helps children get outdoors to play, imagine and explore in nearby nature with a province-wide network of volunteer-led nature groups. For more information go to www.naturekidsbc.ca

