Name: _____ Date: _____

Why Flowers Wear Bright Colors

Circle group

A flower is not just pretty. It is the part of a plant that makes seeds. To make seeds, most flowers need pollen to move from one flower to another of the same kind. Pollen is a fine powder. The move is called pollination.

A plant cannot walk to its neighbor, so many flowers get help. Bees, butterflies, and other insects visit flowers to drink nectar. Nectar is a sweet liquid. When an insect crawls inside a flower, pollen sticks to its body. When it flies to the next flower, some pollen rubs off. The flower pays the insect with nectar. The insect carries the pollen.

That is why many flowers have bright colors and a sweet smell. The colors and smells are signals. They say, "Food is here." Some petals have lines that point to the nectar.

Not all flowers use insects. Grasses and many trees use the wind. Their flowers are small and plain. They do not need to attract anyone. They make lots of light pollen that floats in the air.

When pollen reaches the right place, the flower can start to make seeds. A fruit often grows around them.

Questions

1. What is pollination?

_____

_____

2. What does an insect get from a flower?

_____

_____

3. How does pollen get from one flower to the next?

_____

_____

4. Why do many flowers have bright colors and sweet smells?

_____

_____

5. Why are the flowers of grasses small and plain?

_____

_____

6. What can start to form when pollen reaches the right place?

_____

_____

Words to know

pollen: a fine powder made by flowers that helps them make seeds
pollination: the moving of pollen from one flower to another
nectar: the sweet liquid that flowers make for insects to drink
signals: signs that tell others something
attract: to draw something closer

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Why Flowers Wear Bright Colors

Triangle group

A flower is not just a pretty decoration. It is the part of a plant that makes seeds. To make seeds, most flowers need pollen, a fine powder, to travel from one flower to another of the same kind. This move is called pollination.

A plant cannot walk to its neighbor, so many flowers hire helpers. Bees, butterflies, moths, and other insects visit flowers to drink a sweet liquid called nectar. As an insect crawls inside a flower, pollen sticks to its body. When it flies to the next flower, some of that pollen rubs off. The flower has paid the insect in nectar, and the insect has carried the pollen.

That is why flowers wear bright colors and often smell sweet. The colors and scents are signals that say, "Food is here." Some petals even have lines or spots that point toward the nectar, like a landing strip.

Not all flowers use insects. Grasses and many trees depend on the wind. Their flowers are small, plain, and have no sweet smell, because they do not need to attract anyone. They make huge amounts of light pollen that drifts through the air.

Once pollen reaches the right place, the flower can begin to form seeds and often a fruit around them.

Questions

1. What is pollination?

_____

_____

2. What does an insect get from visiting a flower?

_____

_____

3. How does pollen get from one flower to the next on an insect?

_____

_____

4. Why do many flowers have bright colors and sweet smells?

_____

_____

5. Why are the flowers of grasses small and plain?

_____

_____

6. What can form once pollen reaches the right place in a flower?

_____

_____

Words to know

pollen: a fine powder made by flowers that helps them make seeds
pollination: the moving of pollen from one flower to another
nectar: the sweet liquid that flowers make for insects to drink
signals: signs that tell others something
attract: to draw something closer

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Why Flowers Wear Bright Colors

Square group

A flower is far more than a pretty decoration, since it is the part of a plant responsible for making seeds. To produce seeds, most flowers require pollen, a fine powder, to travel from one flower to another of the same kind. Scientists call this transfer pollination.

Because a plant cannot walk over to its neighbor, many flowers recruit helpers. Bees, butterflies, moths, and other insects visit flowers in order to drink nectar, a sweet liquid. As an insect crawls deep inside a blossom, grains of pollen cling to its body, and when it travels to the next flower, some of that pollen rubs off. The flower has paid the insect in nectar, and the insect has delivered the pollen in return.

That bargain explains why so many flowers display bright colors and give off sweet scents. These features serve as advertisements announcing that food is available. Some petals even carry lines or spots that guide visitors toward the nectar, much like the markings on a landing strip.

Not every flower depends on insects, however. Grasses and many trees rely on the wind, so their flowers tend to be small, plain, and unscented, since there is no one to attract. Instead, they release enormous quantities of light pollen that drifts through the air.

Once pollen arrives at the right place, the flower can begin forming seeds and frequently a fruit around them.

Questions

1. What is pollination?

_____

_____

2. What reward does an insect receive for visiting a flower?

_____

_____

3. How does pollen travel from one flower to the next on an insect?

_____

_____

4. Why do so many flowers have bright colors and sweet scents?

_____

_____

5. Why do the flowers of grasses tend to be small and plain?

_____

_____

6. What can form once pollen arrives at the right place in a flower?

_____

_____

Words to know

pollen: a fine powder made by flowers that helps them make seeds
pollination: the moving of pollen from one flower to another
nectar: the sweet liquid that flowers make for insects to drink
attract: to draw something closer

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Why Flowers Wear Bright Colors

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Why Flowers Wear Bright Colors

Easier · 193 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3

1. The move of pollen from one flower to another of the same kind.
2. Nectar, a sweet liquid to drink.
3. It sticks to an insect's body and rubs off at the next flower.
4. They are signals that tell insects food is there.
5. They use wind, so they do not need to attract insects.
6. Seeds, and often a fruit around them.

Triangle: Why Flowers Wear Bright Colors

This passage · 211 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.9

1. The move of pollen from one flower to another of the same kind.
2. Nectar, a sweet liquid to drink.
3. It sticks to the insect's body and rubs off at the next flower.
4. They act as signals that tell insects food is there.
5. They use wind, not insects, so they do not need to attract anyone.
6. Seeds, and often a fruit around them.

Square: Why Flowers Wear Bright Colors

Harder · 232 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 8.3

1. The transfer of pollen from one flower to another of the same kind.
2. Nectar, a sweet liquid to drink.
3. It clings to the insect's body and rubs off at the next flower.
4. They act as advertisements telling insects that food is available.
5. They rely on the wind, so there is no one to attract.
6. Seeds, and frequently a fruit around them.