

ANIMALS HELP PLANTS

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From One Flower to Another

Some animals are very important to plants.
They help plants reproduce, or make new plants.

New plants grow from seeds. So plants must
make seeds to reproduce. Flowers are the plant
parts that make seeds. To make seeds, flowers
need to get pollen from other flowers.



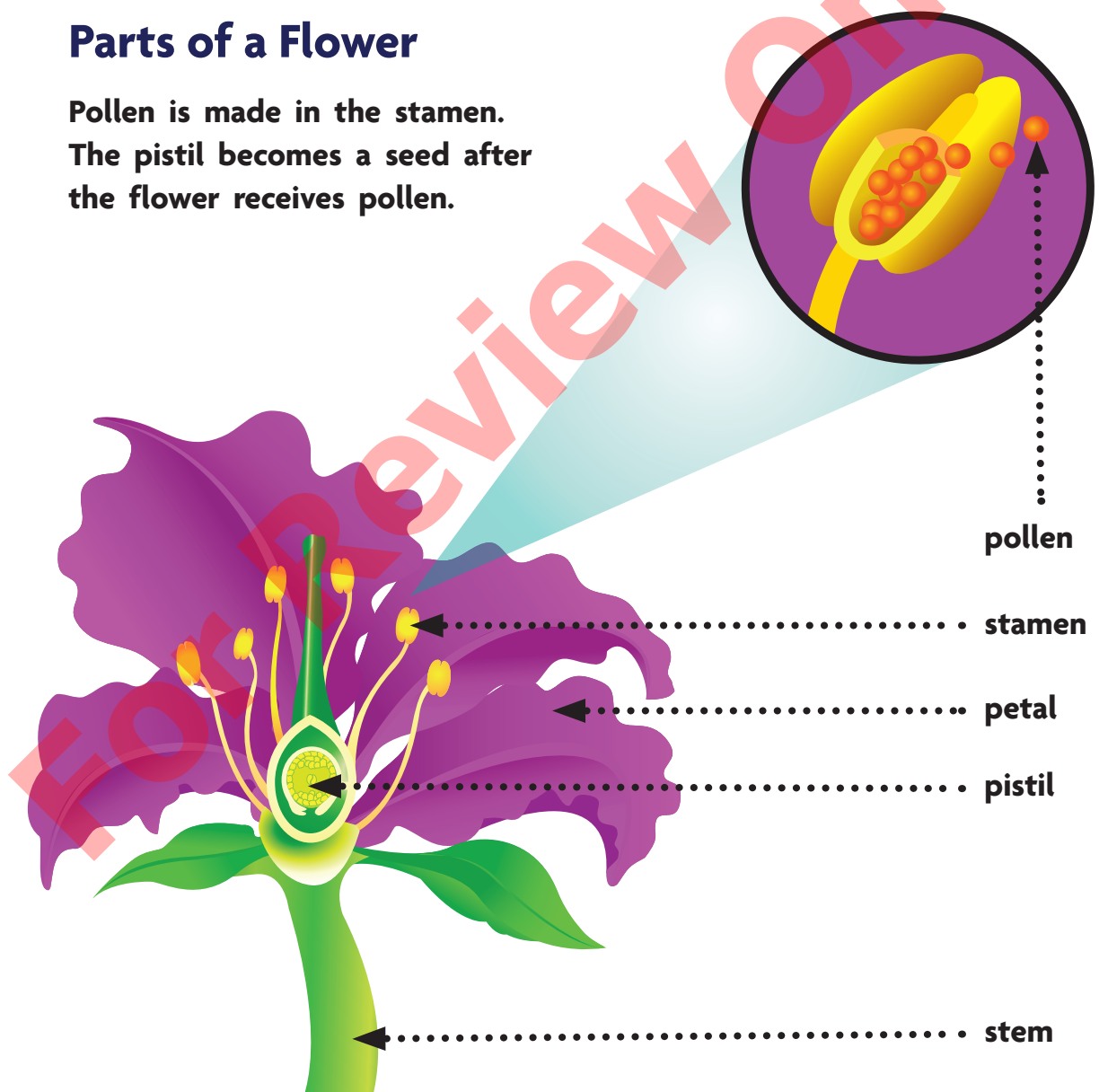
Many plants need animals to
help them make new plants.

Pollen is found in flowers. It usually looks like yellow dust. The pollen must be carried from one flower to another. Some animals do this. They pollinate the plants. They are called pollinators.

Parts of a Flower

Pollen is made in the stamen.

The pistil becomes a seed after the flower receives pollen.



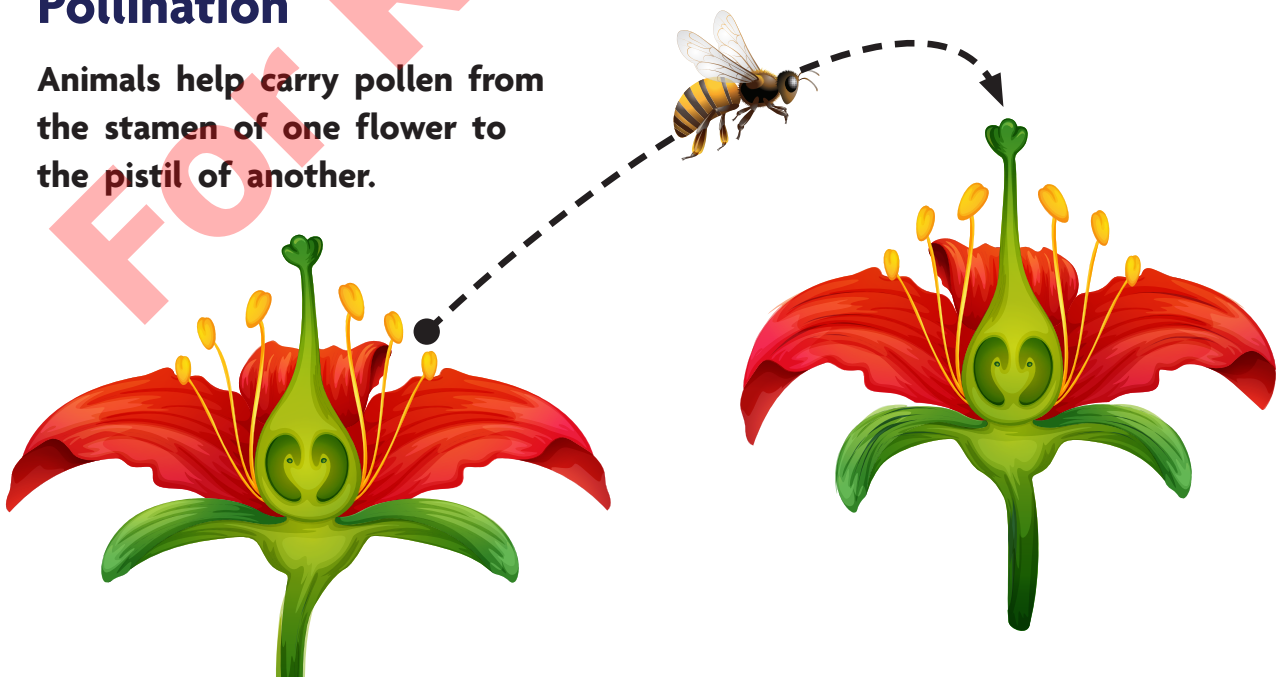
Animal Helpers

Pollinators carry pollen from one flower to another. First, the animal visits a flower. Pollen from the flower sticks to the animal. Then the animal visits another flower of the same kind. The pollen from the first flower falls into the new flower. The pollen joins with the new flower to make seeds. Fruit grows around the seeds to protect them.

Pollen is made up of tiny little pieces, or grains. Pollen grains come in many shapes and sizes. Some are round. Some are square. Some are shaped like triangles. Some even look like mouse ears! The shape of pollen grains can be seen only with a microscope.

Pollination


Animals help carry pollen from the stamen of one flower to the pistil of another.



Pollen looks like
chalk dust. The
grains are very tiny.

▼ These photos show how pollen grains look under a microscope.





When a bee lands
on a flower, the
hairs on its body
pick up pollen.

Bees in Danger

Bees are known for their yellow and black stripes and their honey. But there is more to bees than that. Bees are very important pollinators.

Bees are attracted to a flower's bright color or sweet smell. They like to feed on nectar. Nectar is a sugary liquid in plants. It helps bees make honey.

Bees also pick up pollen when they visit a flower. They rub against the flower. Pollen sticks to their bodies. This pollen rubs onto the next flower the bees visit. If the flowers are the same, the pollen will help the second flower make seeds and fruit.

Bees and plants work together. Bees need nectar and pollen to live. Flowers need bees to help them make new plants.



Busy Bees!

Honeybees are pollinators for most of the food grown in the United States. This includes many fruits and vegetables such as oranges, strawberries, and peas. Bees help pollinate apple trees like these.