

# Clover Challenge

## All About Pollinators



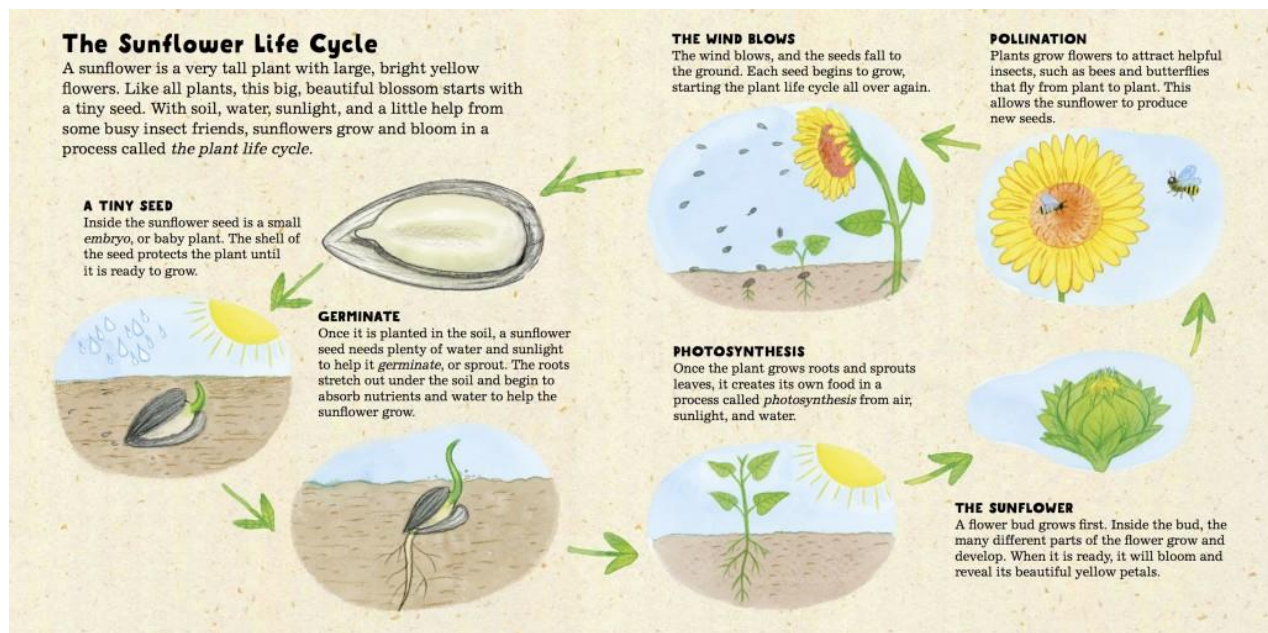
Pollinators are the critters in our environment who pollinate the vegetables, fruits, and flowers in our backyards. They are important because without them, we wouldn't have the food that we need. As a 4-H'er, we should welcome them into our habitat. Pollinators have the same basic needs that people do, food, shelter, water, and space to call home. We can attract pollinators to our backyards by doing a few things to make the space safe and clean. So, make room for birds, bats, bees, wasps, and all sorts of butterflies who pollinate the growing plants in our world.

Be a conservationist. Conservation is preserving, protecting, and managing the environment.

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## Flowers to Attract Pollinators

Pollinators (bees, butterflies, hummingbirds) are in search of nectar from flowers. They pollinate by carrying pollen from flower to flower, but they aren't even aware of this activity. Their main goal is to find nectar to feed upon. Talk with your family and make a plan for having flowers available for pollinators to find the nectar they need. Flowers can be in a vegetable garden or they can be a patch of grass that the family decides to leave alone to grow naturally. As the grass (and weeds) grow, flowers will form and develop with the nectar for the pollinators to find. The LSU AgCenter recommends these flowers to plant in your backyard for pollinators-butterfly bush, bee balm, lavender, coneflower, black eyed susan, borage, and milkweed. If flowers are left alone, they will reseed by themselves and create a whole new plant for pollinators.





## How to Make a Bee Hotel Activity

Not all bees live in hives. Some bees are solitary, meaning they make individual next cells for to lay eggs (larvae). Most solitary bees live in small tunnels or holes in the ground, old pieces of wood, trees in the forest, or anywhere they can find a safe space to lay their larvae. You can make a bee hotel by collecting small pieces of wood and drilling holes in the ends. Follow the instructions below:



1. Locate wood or timber that you can pick up in your environment. Small logs are good because they can be stacked together to create layers.
2. With the help of an adult, drill holes into the end of pieces of wood with a variety of diameters (between 2 mm and 10 mm). Drill between ¼ inch to 1 inch deep.
3. Locate a spot in your yard that has full sun and a good food source. Meaning, somewhere close to water and flowers.
4. Pile or stack the pieces of wood together to create an inviting home for the bees (see image above). Using rope or string, tie the bundle together to create a secure spot.
5. Observe the bee hotel over the next days and weeks. Take photos and post them on your social media page. **Thank you, you are now a conservationist!**

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## Hummingbird Nectar Activity

According to the Smithsonian, since 1970, hummingbird populations in the US and Canada have declined by 29% or by 3 million birds. What can 4-H'ers do about this? 4-H'ers can provide hummingbird nectar in their backyards. This will provide a steady food source, and also encourage hummingbirds to come into our habitats to pollinate flowers too.

### Ingredients

- Refined white sugar
- Water



### Directions for making safe hummingbird food:

1. Mix 1 part sugar with 4 parts water (for example, 1 cup of sugar with 4 cups of water) until the sugar is dissolved
2. Do **not** add red dye (red dye or coloring isn't necessary to attract hummingbirds and could be harmful to them).
3. Fill your hummingbird feeders with the sugar water and place outside
4. Extra sugar water can be stored in a refrigerator
5. Change feeders every other day and thoroughly clean them each time to prevent harmful mold growth

## Write a Letter to the Pollinators



Take a minute and write a letter to the bees (or butterflies, bats, and hummingbirds) thanking them for all that they do for Agriculture. These tiny critters pollinate flowers that produce the foods that we eat. If you could talk with a bee, what would you say?

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:



Thank you for

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Sometimes I'm afraid of you because

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I am learning about conservation by protecting the environment, as a 4-H'er, I pledge to

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Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_

References:



- [Pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)
- Discovery Education-Puzzle Maker
- The Pollinator Garden; About plants, pollinating insects, and gardening. November 2017
- [Hummingbird Nectar Recipe](#)
- Grow your own plant from seed to flower! Excerpt from My Sunflower. March 2016

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