American Heart Association®
Teaching Gardens®

Grade Band
2-5

Time
30 minutes

Season
Spring or Fall

Location
Outdoors

Pollinator Observations

Connections to Content Standards:

NGSS Disciplinary Core Ideas:

LS2.A: Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems
Plants depend on animals for pollination or to move their seeds around.

Description:

In this activity, students visit a spot where flowers are blooming and search for pollinators. Then they observe one or more pollinators and record their observations.

Materials:

- Pollinator Observations sheets, one per student or one per pair of students
- Pencils
- Clipboards

Preparation:

- Find an area of your school garden or grounds where flowers are currently blooming. Plan to visit on a sunny day in the late morning or afternoon, when pollinators are most active.

Activity:

1. **Discuss Plant and Animal Interdependence:** *What are some ways that plants help animals? What are some ways animals help plants?* Give students a moment to think, then have them turn to a partner and share their thoughts on each of these questions. Then, give pairs a chance to share out to the whole group if they want. If they don't include pollination in their sharing, add that as a way plants and animals help each other, and introduce the word "pollinator" if they haven't heard it before. *A pollinator is an animal that moves pollen from flower to flower, helping the flowers turn into fruits and seeds. Today, we will search for animals and plants helping each other in the garden, take some time to notice what they are doing, and record our observations.* Introduce the Pollinator Observation sheet, and set the tone for quietly visiting the area where flowers are blooming. Then distribute the Pollinator Observation sheet, a pencil, and a clipboard to each student or pair of students, and walk as a group to the area with flowers.

Pollinator Observations, *continued*

2. **Observe Pollinators:** Show students how to be as quiet and still as possible for the chance to see as many pollinators as possible. Ask them to spread out around the flowers. Encourage them to include as much detail as possible in filling out their Pollinator Observation sheet. As they finish, encourage them to quietly move around the space to notice other pollinators in action. When everyone is done, return to the classroom or another gathering space.

3. **Wrap Up:** Ask students to share what they observed. Then ask, *When a bee visits a flower, what does the bee get* (food, in the form of nectar or pollen)? *What does the flower get* (pollen moved from one flower to another, so the flowers get fertilized and seeds and fruit can grow, and these seeds can grow into new plants)?