

Play the Pollinator Game

All Ages

What could be more fun than pretending to be a butterfly? With the twist of a pipe cleaner you'll have butterfly feet on your finger, and that's all you need to pollinate flowers! In the life cycle of plants, pollination is needed to make seeds. Most plants need pollinators, like the butterfly, to carry pollen from flower to flower. Insect pollinators have hairy bodies and legs. The hairs help hold and move sticky pollen from flower to flower and plant to plant. The fuzzy bristles of your pipe cleaner act like the hairy legs of an insect. Play the pollinator game and learn first hand how it is done.

Supplies: (for 1 child)

- 1 tbs cornmeal - pollen
- 2 cupcake liners or small bowls – flowers
- 1 pipe cleaner cut in half – feet and antennae
- 6 jelly beans/large chocolate chip – nectar
- magnifying glass - optional but always fun



The Game:

- * Place 3 jellybeans in each cupcake liner flower. Add the cornmeal to one flower, covering the jelly beans.
- * Fold one piece of pipe cleaner in half over the middle of the index finger and gently twist under the finger. Bend the ends slightly to form 'feet'. Fold the second piece in half around the same finger and gently twist on top of the finger. Curl ends to form 'antennae'.
- * Now 'fly' to the first flower, with the cornmeal pollen, and find a drop of nectar—jelly bean. Remember insects walk all over flowers while looking for nectar. Notice how the pollen sticks to your butterfly feet. Use your magnifying glass to look more closely.
- * Fly to the second flower to search for another drop of nectar. Notice how some of the pollen has fallen into the second flower. That's pollination! You did it!



Follow-up:

- * Go outside to watch bees and other insects visiting flowers. Can you see any pollen on them? (Your magnifying glass will be useful for this.) Do you think buzzing might help shake off some pollen? Can you think of any birds or animals that are pollinators?
- * Go outside to look at flowers up close, bring your magnifier. Can you tell where the pollen is found? Do all flowers have the same amount of pollen? What are flowers doing to attract the pollinators? (colour, smell, patterns, petal shapes)
- * Think of the foods you like to eat. Did a pollinator help to make that food? Talk about what the world would look like without pollinators.

Tip: Toss the leftover cornmeal out for the birds. Toss leftover jelly beans—wait, who has leftover jelly beans?



Try our pollinator friendly projects—[Welcome Pollinators](#) and [Pollinator Water Station](#) .



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