



Making Seeds

Reading page for Pollinators week 2: Who are the pollinators?

Have you ever seen seeds inside of a piece of fruit like an apple, orange, or watermelon? What about inside of a vegetable like a cucumber, tomato, or squash? What do those little things do?

Although it may be hard to imagine, inside each seed is a very tiny baby plant. When the seed is exposed to the right conditions, which often include warm temperatures and moisture, then the new plant will start to grow. Why are seeds so important?

Most of the plants growing on Earth today depend on seeds to make new plants to replace themselves when they die. There are many different kinds of plants and some have developed other ways to make more plants. However, most rely on seeds to ensure their survival.

To make seeds (usually inside of fruits), many plants need the help of pollinators. Pollinators are animals that carry pollen from one flower to another flower, resulting in the growth of fruit and seeds. Some plants will not produce any seeds without the help of pollinators. Apple trees will not grow apples (and apple seeds) without the help of pollinators. Other plants may be able to make some fruit and seeds without the help of pollinators because their pollen will move with the wind or rain too, but they can make a lot more if pollinators help them out. Orange trees can grow oranges (and orange seeds) without the help of pollinators, but they will make a lot more oranges if there are

pollinators to help them. Some plants do not need pollinators to help them make seeds at all. Grass and corn plants get help from the wind to move their pollen.

Here is a list of some of our common edible crops that get help from pollinators to make their fruits and seeds:

Fruit: Apples, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, cherries, figs, grapes, grapefruit, kiwi fruit, mango, melons, peach, pear, raspberries, strawberries

Nuts: Almonds, cashews, coconuts

Vegetables: Avocados, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, cucumbers, onion, potatoes, pumpkin, squash, zucchini

Seeds: Flax, sesame, sunflowers

Additional Favorite Treats: Chocolate, coffee, vanilla, sugarcane, tea

Do you see anything you like to eat on the list? Just think, without pollinators helping these plants make seeds you may not be able to enjoy this tasty and healthy treat.

You might look at the list and see that not all of the things on the list are fruits that we eat. Carrots are the roots of the plant, so why should we care if they make fruit and seeds when we just want to eat their roots? Although we may dig up carrots to eat their crunchy roots, gardeners and farmers also leave some of the carrots in the ground so they can make flowers and eventually make new seeds. Without some of the carrot plants being left in the garden to make new seeds, we would not be able to grow more carrots.

In addition to the foods we eat, pollinators help make seeds for plants and trees that make oxygen for our air, give us wood for building our homes, and keep our soil healthy and water clean. Pollinators are very important to our lives. Have you thanked a pollinator today?

Reading Comprehension Questions:

1. Pollinators help plants make:

- A. Leaves
- B. Roots
- C. Stems
- D. Fruit and seeds

2. True or false, all plants need pollinators to help them make seeds:

- True
- False

3. In what ways do plants help people?

- A. They provide food for us.
- B. They provide oxygen for our air.
- C. They provide wood for our homes.
- D. They keep our soil and water healthy.
- E. All of the above.

4. True or false, pollinators only help plants. They are not important for people.

- True
- False

5. List a fruit or vegetable that is grown with the help of pollinators that you like to eat: