



SUMMER | Critters Pollinators: Bees & Butterflies Working Together

Summary:

Bees and butterflies are some of our plants' best pollinator friends. They work together to help spread pollen that can fertilize our fruits and veggies, helping them to grow. Today, we're going to practice teamwork in a pollinator-inspired field day.

Before Visiting the Garden:

Gather: Bring an old shoe or something you can use to mark parameters for a race

Explore: Photographs of butterflies, bees, and maps of migration (or bring along molded plastic models or plush versions if you have them on hand!)

Read: *Butterflies in the Garden* by Carol Lerner

In the Garden:

In the garden, bees and butterflies both work as pollinators, spreading pollen from male to female parts of flowers to help our plants reproduce and grow. Bees are able to move like tiny fighter planes from flower to flower since their small, compact bodies allow for sleek maneuvers. They have agility, but they have to move at shorter distances from flower to flower. Butterflies, on the other hand, are built more like cargo planes. They can go farther distances and spread pollen in wider areas due to their body design. Both short and long distance pollinators are important to keeping gardens growing.

Questions to Explore:

- Examine a bee body. What do you see?
- Examine a butterfly body. What do you see?
- How are bees and butterflies the same?
- How are they different?

Activity:

1. After spending a bit of time discussing the differences in body type, and how these differences figure into the different jobs of bees and butterflies, find an area of grass near the garden.
2. Using your old shoe, or anything else you would like to mark as a finish line, set up a shorter and a longer course for your gardener to run.
3. See how fast your gardener can sprint down the shorter track and how fast it takes them to run around the longer track.
4. Make a relay race if you would like, or even an obstacle course.
5. Work together to find ways to make it around the tracks at different speeds in different ways. If you have a group, have the gardeners run a relay. Split the group into bees (sprinters) and butterflies (distance runners).

At the end of your field day, talk with your gardener about what it was like to run the different distances.

6. How did they feel during or after each race? What did they notice about their heart rate? How did they work with you or their friends to make the experience more interesting? How did working together help?
7. Have a discussion with your gardener about how this relates to the experience of the bees and the butterflies as they use their different bodies and abilities to pollinate in the garden and beyond.

Beyond the Garden | Mail + Monarchs

It may seem like an odd comparison but your mail carrier works a bit like a pollinator. Every day, they bring important information to and from different people. Just like pollinators have migratory patterns—short and long routes—so do mail carriers. Visit your local post office and see if you can talk to a mail carrier about how letters and packages move around your neighborhood and across the country!

Continue Exploring | Supporting Materials

Pollinator Resources: <https://www.nwf.org/Pollinators.aspx>

Pick three relay races and host a neighborhood field day: <http://pbskids.org/zoom/activities/games/>