

A Scientific Protocol: Steps to Collecting Pollinator Visit Data



Materials:

- Budburst-Nativars Pollinator Observation Data Sheet (3 group or 7 group)
- Writing implement
- Timer or tool to measure time
- Meter stick or a measuring tape
- Approximation of the temperature (e.g., phone weather app, outdoor thermometer, etc.)
- Clipboard or something to write on (optional)

Conduct pollinator observations at least once a week while plants are in flower

Before Going Outside

1. Gather all your materials
 - a. Record your name as Observer and enter day's date
 - b. Enter the location of your garden
2. Go over expected behaviors with your teacher
 - a. When observing live animals like bees how to avoid being stung
 - b. When walking around live plants how to protect them from damage

Outside

Before starting an observation, record the following information:

3. Record the approximate temperature (°F) and cloud cover. Pollinators are most active on warm, sunny days between 10 am and 2 pm. If possible, make your observations during periods when all of these conditions are met.
4. Locate your assigned plant and record the full common or scientific name of the plant (and give it a nickname if you want).
5. Go to your plant and measure its height - from the soil to the tallest tip in centimeters (cm).
6. Count the number of flowers for each plant, depending on what species you are observing. If there are more than 100 flowers estimate to the nearest 50.
7. Decide and record what stage the flowers are displaying (early, middle, or late flower).

Now you are ready to start observing pollinators!

Pollinator Observations

8. Sit or stand a few feet away from the plant. You want to clearly see insects but not interfere with their visitation (3-5 ft.).
 9. Record the start time of your observation period.
 10. Your plant may have a single flower or several flowers on it. Each time a pollinator visits your plant AND touches one or more of its flowers, that will count as one visit. Make a tally mark on your data sheet in the correct pollinator space.
 11. If the same pollinator leaves your plant for at least 10 seconds, and then it returns to your plant (touching at least one of the flowers) you will make another tally mark on your data sheet.
 12. During your 10-minute observation period, use the above steps to tally every pollinator visit.
 13. Stop at the end of 10 minutes. Complete a separate Data Sheet for each plant you observe.
- Submit your data online at budburst.org