Welcome!

Garden Creatures & Pollination

Week 4

Week 4: Garden Creatures & Pollination

Program Focus:

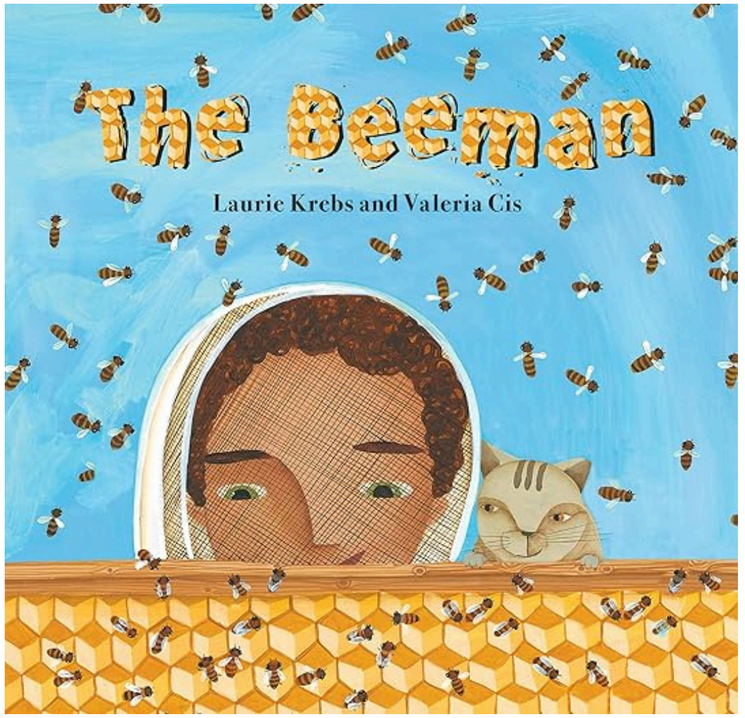
- Learn about creatures that live in gardens and their roles in nature.
- Discover what pollinators are and how they help plants grow.
- Explore why pollinators are important for food, flowers, and specialty crops.
- Create bee and butterfly crafts to understand their role in pollination.

Native blue orchard bees are much better than honey bees at pollinating West Virginia apple, only 250 bees per acre are needed!

Book of the Week:

The Beeman
By: Laurie Krebs

The Beeman follows Grandpa and his grandson as they explore the amazing world of bees. Learn how bees make honey, how beekeepers care for them, and why bees are so important for plants and people.



Story Discussion

- What did the bees do to help plants in the story?
- Why is taking care of bees important for farmers and gardens?
- What kinds of food do we get because of pollinators?
- Have you ever seen bees or butterflies in a garden?

What is a Pollinator?

A pollinator is an animal and insects that moves pollen from flower to flower, helping plants make fruits, seeds, and vegetables.

Common pollinators include:

- Bees – the most important pollinators for many crops
- Butterflies and moths – add beauty and help pollinate flowers
- Other insects, birds, and bats – also assist in pollination
- Without pollinators, many plants couldn’t grow or produce food.

Black-eyed Susans are a specialty crop in West Virginia, grown as a horticulture and floriculture plant. They grow fast, help restore habitats, and provide nectar for local pollinators.

Why Are Pollinators Important?

- Pollinators help plants produce fruits, vegetables, and seeds that feed people and animals.
- They support specialty crops like tomatoes, peppers, squash, berries, and herbs.
- Healthy pollinators help farmers and gardeners grow more food efficiently.
- Protecting pollinators keeps our gardens and local food systems strong.

In West Virginia, blueberries are a specialty crop that needs “buzz pollination” from native bumble bees. Buzz pollination is a technique that releases pollen from flowers.

Week 4 Activity:
Bee and Butterfly Craft

Activity Focus:

- Introduce participants to bees, butterflies, and other pollinators and discuss how they help plants grow.
- Provide materials for participants to craft their own bees and butterflies.
- Conduct a pollinator simulation with paper flowers and “pollen,” showing how pollinators move pollen from flower to flower.
- Discuss how pollinators support gardens, farms, and specialty crops, helping produce healthy food.

Pollen is a tiny powder made by flowers that helps plants grow fruits and seeds. When bees and other pollinators move pollen from flower to flower, it helps many specialty crops like apples, blueberries, and pumpkins grow.

Connecting Specialty Crops to Pollinators

- Many specialty crops grown in West Virginia depend on pollinators.
- Bees and butterflies help crops produce fruits, vegetables, and seeds that we eat or sell at farmers markets.
- Supporting pollinators means healthier crops, tastier meals, and stronger local food systems.
- Understanding this relationship helps us see how farms, gardens, and pollinators work together.

Reflection Questions:

- Why are bees and butterflies important for gardens and farms?
- How do pollinators help specialty crops grow?
- What can we do to protect pollinators in our gardens or communities?
- How does learning about pollinators help us understand where our food comes from?