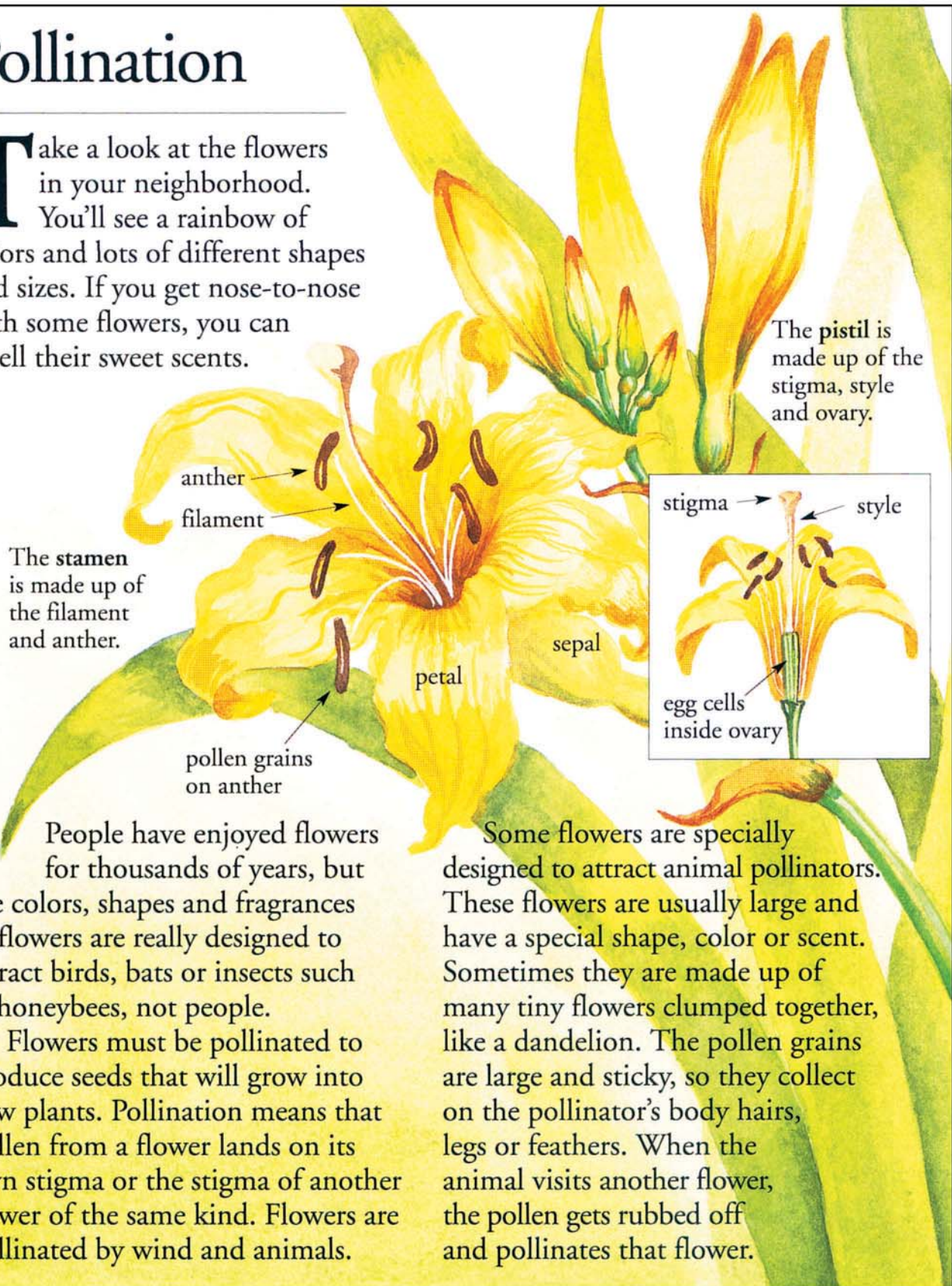


Pollination

Take a look at the flowers in your neighborhood. You'll see a rainbow of colors and lots of different shapes and sizes. If you get nose-to-nose with some flowers, you can smell their sweet scents.



The **pistil** is made up of the stigma, style and ovary.

The **stamen** is made up of the filament and anther.

anther

filament

sepal

petal

pollen grains on anther

stigma

style

egg cells inside ovary

People have enjoyed flowers for thousands of years, but the colors, shapes and fragrances of flowers are really designed to attract birds, bats or insects such as honeybees, not people.

Flowers must be pollinated to produce seeds that will grow into new plants. Pollination means that pollen from a flower lands on its own stigma or the stigma of another flower of the same kind. Flowers are pollinated by wind and animals.

Some flowers are specially designed to attract animal pollinators. These flowers are usually large and have a special shape, color or scent. Sometimes they are made up of many tiny flowers clumped together, like a dandelion. The pollen grains are large and sticky, so they collect on the pollinator's body hairs, legs or feathers. When the animal visits another flower, the pollen gets rubbed off and pollinates that flower.

POLLINATE A FLOWER

Like a honeybee, you can pollinate a flower. Then keep watch over the next few weeks as your flower makes its seeds. If you collect the seeds later, when they are dry, you can plant them in your garden next year and grow many new plants, with lots more flowers.

You'll need:

a tiny paintbrush

a small piece of cardboard

some colored yarn



1. Find a patch of flowers, all the same kind, that have just opened. Rub your finger lightly on the anthers. If some pollen comes off on your finger, the flowers are ready to be pollinated.

2. With your paintbrush, gently collect some pollen from the anthers of a flower and brush it onto your cardboard.



3. Move to another flower and paint its stigma with the pollen on the cardboard.



4. Tie a piece of colored yarn loosely around the bottom of the flower, where it is attached to the stem. This marker will help you remember which flower you pollinated.

5. Pollinate several flowers, but use only the pollen that comes from the same kind of flower.



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