



# HALE AT HOME

## Pollinator Race

Pollinators like butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, and even mosquitoes are so important! Flowering plants like trees, fruits, vegetables, and others rely on pollinators to create seeds and start new generations. Without pollinators, pretty flowers would never turn into seeds and fruit. When a bee feasts on a flower's delicious nectar, it carries pollen to the next flower it visits and fertilizes it. What a team! If you were a bee, how would you do? In this activity, compete with a few family members to see who's the most popular guest at the pollen party.

### Materials

For this activity you'll need scissors, paper, markers, cotton balls, and cups or bowls.

### Setup

Cut out 10–15 paper flowers of different colors, each about 8 inches in diameter. Use the markers to color a cotton ball to match each flower. These are the pollen. Set aside an equal number of white cotton balls. These are the nectar. Place the flowers around your play area, and put a cup or bowl on top of each flower, in the center. Drop two cotton balls in each cup or bowl—one that matches (which represents that flower's pollen) and a white one (which represents that flower's nectar).

### Play

You have two goals: 1) Collect as much nectar from the flowers as you can; 2) Pollinate as many flowers as possible. Ask everyone to start at the same location, away from the play area. When the race begins, each player should find a flower, take its nectar (white cotton ball), and carry its pollen (colorful cotton ball) to another flower. When you reach your second flower, trade the pollen you brought with you for the pollen that's in that flower. If the flower still has nectar, take it—you now have two nectars, nice job! You're a well-fed bee. Continue visiting flowers until there's no more nectar. Then see who collected the most nectar, and celebrate a great race! Based on the colors, you'll be able to tell which flowers exchanged pollen thanks to you and your fellow bees.

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