



WHAT IS POLLINATION?

Pollination occurs when pollen is moved within flowers or carried from one flower to another of the same species by birds, bats, other animals, or by the wind.

This transfer leads to fertilization and successful seed and fruit production. Pollination ensures that a plant will produce full-bodied fruit and a complete set of fertile seeds, capable of germinating.

Did you know that every third mouthful of food is produced by bees pollinating crops? Flowering plants rely on bees for pollination so that they can produce fruit and seeds. Bees help pollinate fruit crops such as pears, peaches, strawberries and raspberries and vegetable crops such as cucumber, melon, squash, pumpkin and zucchini.

Managed honey bees are vital for the pollination of crops in Canada. Pollination increases the quality as well as the quantity of crop yield. Well-pollinated crops produce two to eight times more than poorly pollinated crops. The next time you enjoy the abundance of local Ontario produce at your local market or grocery store, take a minute to thank the honey bee and other pollinators.

Pollinators are the insects that pollinate flowers. These include bees, wasps, butterflies and moths, flies and beetles.

POLLINATION & THE ENVIRONMENT — KEEP THE DANDELIONS!

The impact of flowering plants on the environment is important, helping to purify water and prevent erosion through roots that hold the soil in place and foliage that buffers the impact of rain as it falls to earth. Our water cycle depends on plants to return moisture to the atmosphere, and plants depend on pollinators to help them reproduce.

Of all the plants that support pollinators, probably the single most valuable early spring wildflower is the dandelion. After our long Ontario winter, beekeepers know the bees will avoid starvation if they can stay alive until the dandelions bloom. Their presence means more variety of nectar and pollen sources for native bees and others, such as butterflies. They help fill gaps in the succession of planted flowers, and add to the variety of flower shapes, colors and scents that contribute to the health and well-being of the hive.

And aren't they pretty? Instead of thinking of them as an annoying weed, take a closer look at these bright yellow flowers and notice the honey bee, fat bumblebee or slender solitary bee humming along gathering nectar and pollen. Later, in June and July, these same bees may be pollinating our tomatoes and cucumbers.

So hold off on the mowing; the bees will thank you. And so will the gardeners and orchard growers that depend on bees for pollination.



*To learn more about the
Ontario Beekeepers' Association visit our
website at www.ontariohoney.ca*

