

Upskilling community leaders for Australian Pollinator Week

Activities for stingless bee keeping groups



DISCLAIMER

Hello and thank you for being part of this project.

This presentation is designed to be shared with the broader community. It is not designed to be changed in anyway, unless authorised by the author.

A script has been provided so that you can confidently deliver this presentation, with some basic facts and wonderful images donated by enthusiastic photographers.

If you have any questions, please feel free to either visit the Bees Business website or email Megan Halcroft

Ok! Let's begin!

(You are welcome to share links with participants, or you can download and print this document so that everyone has a hard copy)



Australian Pollinator Week

Why should we celebrate it
and how can we get involved?



www.beesbusiness.com.au
go to the Australian Pollinator Week tab



Hello! And welcome to this presentation about the importance of pollinator week! This presentation has been created by Dr Megan Halcroft, from Bees Business, to teach people about the importance of pollination and to encourage communities to get involved in Australian Pollinator Week.

What is pollination?



So, first things first, what is pollination?

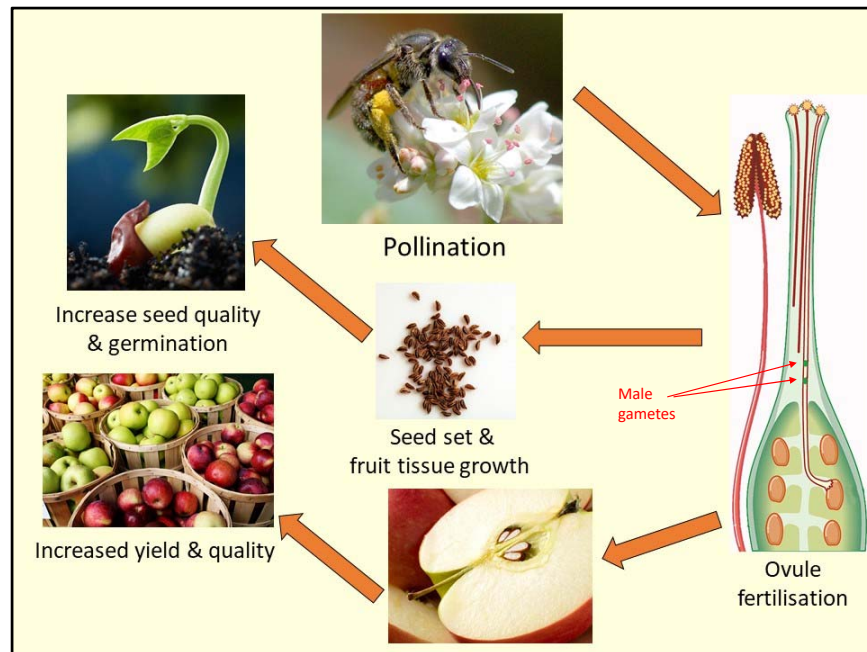
Put simply, pollination is the process by which plants reproduce.

Like in humans, plants have sex cells. Male sex cells are called pollen and are found on the anthers of a flower. Female sex cells are called ovules and are found in the base of the stigma.

For pollination to occur, male and female sex cells must unite.

This requires pollen to be carried from the anthers to the stigma. This is done by a pollination vector, which can be wind, water or an animal.

Once pollen has made contact with the stigma, a sugary secretion on the stigma nourishes the pollen grains.

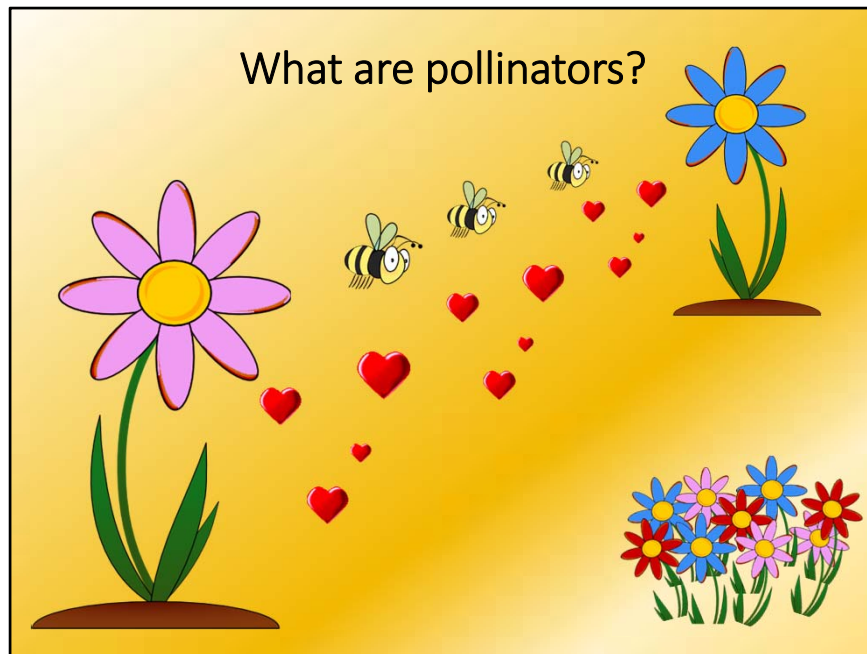


This nourishment causes the growth of a pollen tube, which carries the male gametes down the stigma towards the ovules

When the male gametes finally unite with the ovule, fertilisation occurs and causes the development of seeds.

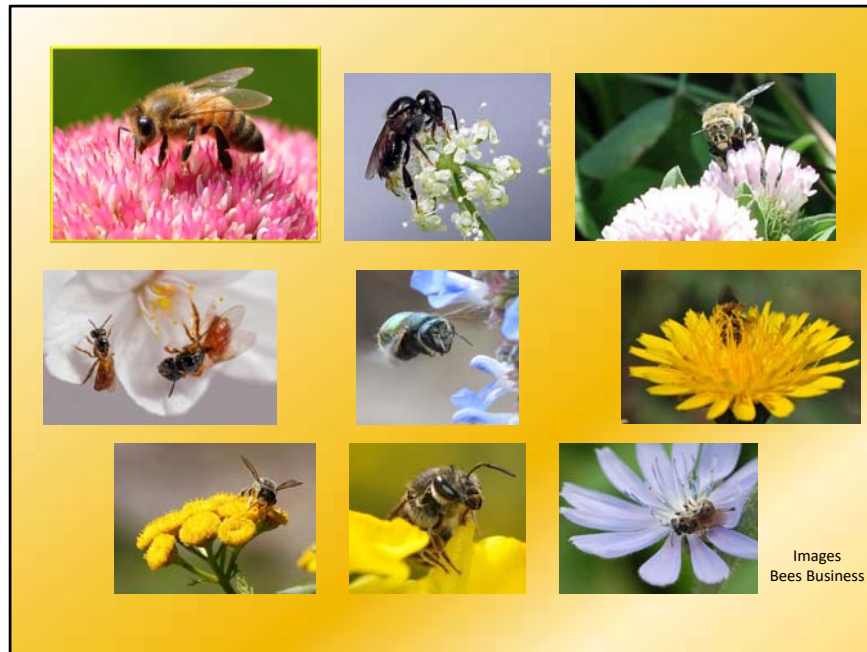
These developing seeds produce a plant hormone which stimulates fruit tissue growth.

This in turn increases fruit and seed quality, and fruit yield.



WHAT ARE POLLINATORS?

A pollinator is an animal that assists in the reproduction of plants, by transferring pollen from flower to flower, with the largest group of animal pollinators being insects.

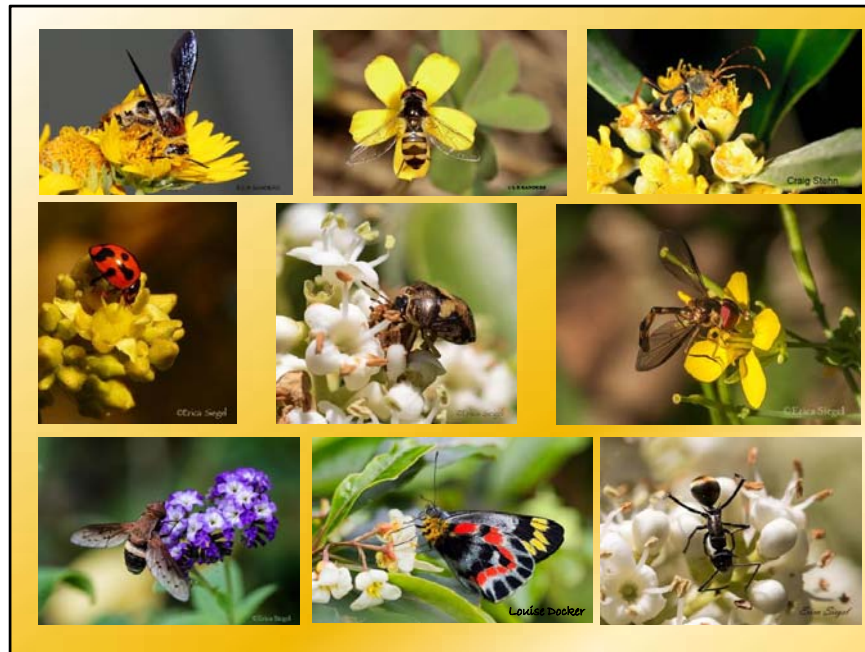


Despite the fact that European honey bees are used widely in Australia's crop production, they are not actually native to Australia.

Australia has approximately 2000 species of native bee.

Many of these bees visit flowers to collect pollen, which is protein, to feed to their babies and nectar, which is sugar, to use as an energy source.

Our native Bees actively collect pollen and most of them pack it into special hairs under their body. As they move over the flowers, large numbers of pollen grains are transferred between flowers.



Australia also has a wide variety of other insect pollinators.

Wasps, hoverflies and ladybeetles also collect nectar from flowers, to give them the energy to perform other useful roles.

Wasps require the energy to hunt other insects for food. This includes pest insects.

And Hoverflies and ladybeetles need energy to hunt aphids.

As the pollinators visit flowers, small amounts of pollen get stuck to their bodies, and is transferred to the stigma of flowers.

What is Pollinator Week?



What is pollinator week?

It's a designated week when communities, businesses and organisations can come together to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators and support their needs. Pollinator week has been celebrated in the northern hemisphere since 2007. But June is not a very inspiring time for insects in Australia.

Australian pollinator week did not come into being until 2015, as part of a community project called "Bee aware of your native bees."

Australian Pollinator Week acknowledges **our** important and unique insect pollinators during the Southern Hemisphere's spring

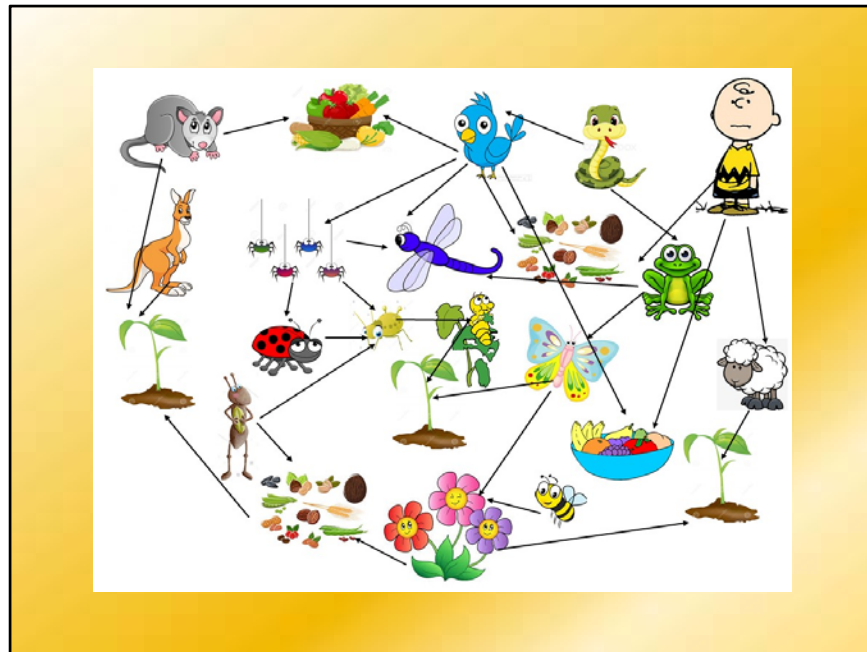
It is held during the 2nd week of November, every year.

It is held from Sunday to Sunday, to coincide with the Wild Pollinator Count



So why should we participate in Australian Pollinator Week events?

Because Pollination services within agricultural and horticultural systems are vital for food production.



And Pollinators drive biodiversity.



But Currently, some pollinator populations are declining due to inappropriate pesticide use, habitat loss and food resource loss.

We need to make people more aware of the importance of our insect pollinators. And that they are under threat.

What can we do?



What can we do?

As Individuals, we can help reverse pollinator declines.

We can reduce or stop using pesticides,

We can plant more flowering plants in your garden

and we can create nesting spaces such as bee hotels, or making space for ground nesting insects in your garden



However, the biggest thing that people can do is to spread the word about the importance of pollinators
Through education, and events such as Australian Pollinator Week, we can make people aware of these hard-working insects.
And hopefully this will encourage more people to care for the pollinators around them.



Group activities encourage discussion and further engagement, while having fun

Stingless bee group activities

Share your groups knowledge with the community,

set up an 'eduction' / budding / soft split

divide or 'split' a hive

honey harvest and tasting

demonstrate different stingless bee keeping methods

where is the best spot to locate your hive?

any activity of interest to others

This presentation is designed to increase community awareness by engaging the public in 'stingless bee group activities.'

There are many free resources that can be found on the Bee Business Website, but many ideas are contained here.

Native stingless bees are a fascinating and fun addition to any garden, preschool, school, retirement village or club.

Conduct some activities to increase people's understanding of these captivating creatures. November is usually a good time to duplicate colonies or harvest honey. Ensure you have an experienced stingless bee keeper on the team and that the colony is strong, and the hive full. If you don't have an experienced bee keeper, contact a local stingless bee keeper and ask them to conduct a workshop. You may need to pay a fee, so be prepared to charge your members a small fee to cover the costs.

Set up an 'eduction' / budding / soft split



Does a member own a colony in a log or tree? Set up an eduction, if the colony appears to be strong.

Does one of your members own a strong colony in a box. Set up an eduction to propagate a new colony.

Don't forget to put a glass or Perspex cover on the hive, under the lid. This will enable you to observe the eduction progress.

You could run a 'book' on when the eduction hive will be ready. Money charged for a guess could go towards purchasing additional hives for further eductions.

Divide or 'split' a hive



The experience of seeing the inside of a real stingless bee colony is an unforgettable one. Share your group's knowledge and experience with others. Conduct a 'show and tell' at your local school, preschool or retirement village. Stingless bees are ideal for these sort of community events as they are harmless and fascinating.

Honey harvest and tasting



Honey harvest is a great way to share the bounties of the stingless bees. Don't be too greedy. They still need their food stores to fuel their tasks.



When harvesting, ensure you think of the bees first.
Remove as many workers from the pots as possible before puncturing the tops

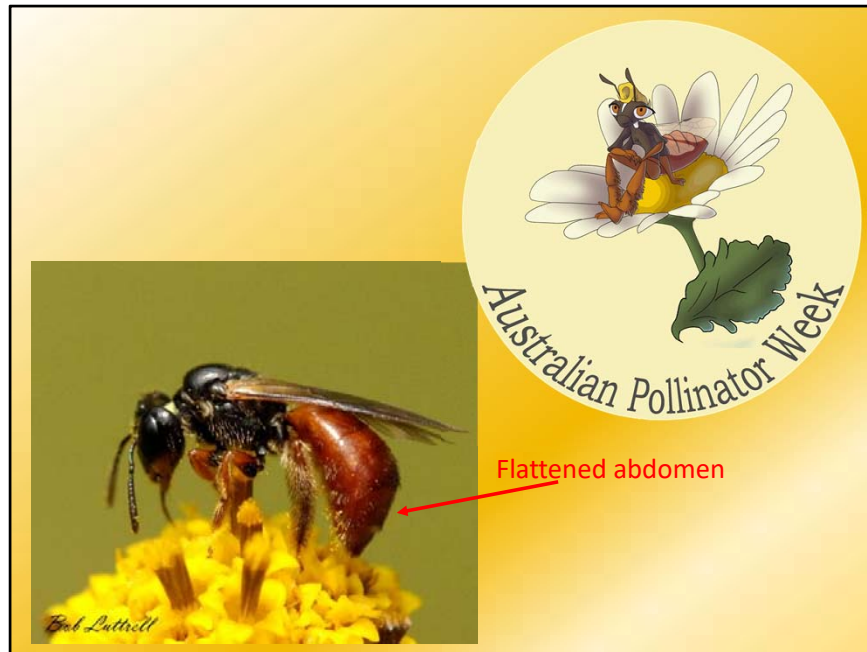
Meet Rita the Reed bee



To help encourage participation in pollinator week, Megan Halcroft and Ebony Salama designed Rita the Reed bee to be the Australian pollinator week mascot
Rita is a semi-social Australian native bee



She progressively feeds her young in the open brood chamber of a small, hollow plant stem.



Whilst designing Rita, Megan and Ebony tried to stay true to the morphological structures that define reed bees.

Her red abdomen has flattened metasomal segments.

She uses this to defend her nest by blocking the entrance.



She has a black thorax pinched at the waist, and yellow markings on her clypeus or forehead, made more distinct by her gorgeous pompadour.



Rita's legs are very hairy, as she needs them to carry pollen back to her nest to feed her babies.

Australian Pollinator Week



So Come and join Rita in spreading the message about Australian Pollinator Week!



Please share these presentations with friend and colleagues

They are available on the Australian Pollinator Week page, on the Bees Business website

Share the awareness.