



Marvellous Moths

What are pollinators?

- Insects, such as bees and moths, are pollinators that help transport pollen from plant to plant.
- This needs to happen so plants can make seeds and new plants can grow.

Photo: Moths are super-pollinators.

Moths Are Super-Pollinators, Says Study

Some people think moths are a bit annoying because they sometimes nibble on clothes. But, a team of scientists think they're really useful and help new plants to grow.

A team of scientists went to Norfolk. They studied different insects that pollinate plants at nine ponds. The team say that moths are important as other pollinators like bees and hoverflies, and could even be more important!

So, how do moths help plants to grow? It's due to something called pollination. The male part of a flower (the stamen) makes something called pollen.

To make a seed, the pollen needs to reach the female part of the flower, the stigma. Many plants, though, can't do this themselves. So, they need insects or the wind to help them move pollen from the stamen to the stigma.

Insects find the petals and smell of flowers irresistible. When they visit the flower, pollen sticks to their body. The insect then flies to another flower and rubs the pollen on its stigma. As a result, seeds can then be made.

The new research shows that moths are more important in the pollination of plants than we used to think.

Moths and bees pollinate plants at different times. Moths are nocturnal but bees are active during the day. Dr Richard Wilson also said that bees only visit plants that have a lot of nectar. The scientists also learned that the pollen stick to the moth's thorax, not its tongue.

So what are scientists going to do now? Dr Jan Axmacher says more research is needed to find out more about moths.

Glossary

irresistible	Too difficult to avoid.
nocturnal	Animals that are active during the night.
nectar	Sugary liquid that is found in flowers and insects feed on.
thorax	The main part of an insect's body.

Questions

1. What is the male part of a flower called?

- petal
- stamen
- stem
- stigma

2. Find and copy the names of **two** insects mentioned in the story **apart from moths**.

1. _____

2. _____

3. 'Moths Are Super-Pollinators, Says Study'.

The headline suggests that...

- Moths pollinate many plants.
- Moths have a superpower.
- Moths only pollinate one plant.
- Moths ignore certain plants.

4. '... usually went to the plants that made the most nectar.'

Tick the adverb that is closest in meaning to 'usually'.

- normally
- rarely
- strangely
- silently

5. Put a number next to each step to show the order in which it happens during insect pollination. The first one has been done for you.

- Insect visits another flower.
- Pollen sticks to insects body.
- 1 Insect finds petals irresistible.
- Pollen rubbed on to stigma.

6. Explain what the story is about in 20 words or fewer.

Answers

1. What is the male part of a flower called?

- petal
- stamen**
- stem
- stigma

2. Find and copy the names of **two** insects mentioned in the story **apart from moths. bees and hoverflies**

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- 3 Insect visits another flower.
- 2 Pollen sticks to insects body.
- 1 Insect finds petals irresistible.
- 4 Pollen rubbed on to stigma.

6. Explain what the story is about in 20 words or fewer.

Accept any reasonable answer that is 20 words or fewer, e.g. A team of scientists say that moths are superpollinators and help plants to grow.