National Education Nature Park

Pollinator Count:

Start exploring insects by taking part in the Pollinator Count. The Pollinator Count has been specifically designed for young people, with no need for prior insect or plant identification experience.

Learners' identifications don't need to be perfect, make use of the training and supporting resources and get counting!

Teaching time

20-30 minutes

Learning outcomes

- to identify different types of pollinators
- to record and interpret data about pollinators in their setting
- to understand their role and contribution of their records as part of the National Education Nature Park

Step by step

1. Introduce the activity to the group, distribute the materials and briefly study the insect identification guides.
2. Get outside with learners and place 50cm x 50cm quadrats over patches of flowers in the chosen habitats – a maximum of three young people per quadrat works best.

Green Skills

Suitable for

KS2-3

Location

Outdoors

Season

Spring, Summer

1 April to 30 September

What you need:

- flowering plants on your site
- 50cm x 50cm quadrats (home-made or shop bought) or 55-60cm hoops
- smartphones or tablets with the Pollinator Count survey open (make sure you are signed into your Nature Park account and either scan the QR code or press the 'launch activity' button on the webpage)
- printed resources: insect recording sheets and insect guides
- clipboards and pencils
- stopwatches or timers

if not using mobile devices:

- cameras to take a photograph of your quadrat
- printed survey forms

National Education Nature Park

Step by step continued:

3. Choose one type of flower in the quadrat as the ‘chosen flower’ type to watch for visiting insects during the survey.
4. Ensure each group has a mobile device with the Pollinator Count Survey open. Make sure you are logged in to the Nature Park website and either select the launch activity’ button at the top of the webpage or scan the QR code to access the survey.
5. Ask learners to:
    - check their location is correct on the map in the survey
    - select which type of habitat they are in
    - upload photographs of the flowers and leaves
    - answer the questions about the date and time

    If you are carrying out the Pollinator Count without mobile devices, learners will carry out these steps using the printed survey form instead.

6. When ready to carry out the Pollinator Count, each group will start a timer for 5 minutes.
7. Ask learners to use the Insect Recording Sheet to record how many of each type of insect LANDS on the ‘chosen flowers’.
8. Learners will then answer the questions that follow about the weather conditions.
9. Ask learners to have a go at identifying the ‘chosen flower’ – what do they think it is called? Do they know its scientific name?
10. Learners will then record the quantity and coverage of the ‘chosen flower’ and any other flowers.
11. If you’d like to, complete the insect identification challenge. This simple activity allows researchers to confirm the data accuracy when analysing the results.

    If you have carried out the Pollinator Count without mobile devices, head back to the classroom to enter your survey results from your printed forms and upload your photos using a computer. Submitting your data lets you see how you're boosting biodiversity, contributes to the National Education Nature Park, and brings real-world science into your classroom.

Reflection

Ask learners to review the total number of insects they recorded and the different types. Invite them to discuss which flowers and which locations had the most insects. Why do they think that might be?

Why not repeat the survey in different areas or at different times? This provides a great opportunity for learners to compare different habitats and will help to build a richer dataset and support learning through investigation. Learners can also explore the impact of changes made to benefit nature, such as comparing an area that has been improved with one that hasn't yet.

National Education Nature Park

Sharing your findings with our science team

Sending in your observations is so important, so you can track your progress over time towards boosting biodiversity at your site, and also allow researcher Dr Victoria Burton (left) to study pollinators nationally across the Nature Park.

The study is designed to account for error amongst young people's observations, so please don't be put off from submitting data because you're concerned about accuracy – we've got it covered!

Using the digital form will automatically submit your results if you are online. If you use the paper forms, please ensure you enter them at a computer during or straight after the session. You can view the results on the Nature Park website.

National Education Nature Park and Climate Action Awards

For more quality-assured learning resources visit
www.educationnaturepark.org.uk

Led by

Natural History Museum

With

RHS

THE ROYAL SOCIETY

Commissioned by

Department for Education

Partners

Learning through Landscapes

Manchester Metropolitan University

NBN Trust
Making data work for nature

Royal Geographical Society with IBG
Advancing geography and geographical learning

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Working with

esri UK
THE SCIENCE OF WHERE