



Bees and flowering plants need each other. The bees pollinate the flowers and the flowers feed the bees with nectar and pollen. Most flowers have special organs called nectaries that secrete nectar. A flower is designed so that as a bee collects nectar, its body accidentally brushes against the male and female parts of the flower picking up and depositing pollen. A bee's body is covered in feathery hairs to help collect pollen. But the bees don't eat all the pollen.

a. Honey bee worker collecting nectar and pollen from ivy. Ivy blooms in the autumn and is

plant can use its own pollen to fertilize its seeds. This is called self pollination. However, many plants, including apples, will not use their own pollen. They need pollen from a different plant. This is called cross pollination. When crops require insect pollination, farmers often buy or rent bee colonies. Bumble bee colonies are commonly used to pollinate greenhouse crops like tomatoes. Honey bee colonies are used to pollinate outdoor crops like apples and almonds.

Although insects are the main way that plants transmit pollen from one plant to another, they are not the only way. Birds, such as hummingbirds, or