

How & Why Insects Visit Flowers



A butterfly has landed on
a flower. It is searching
for nectar, a sweet
liquid in the
flower's center.



This butterfly is a yellow tiger swallowtail. Nectar is its main food. The butterfly pushes its long tongue deep into the flower to drink.



**Ants and bees come to flowers to get nectar, too.
These insects do not know it, but they help the plants
that they visit.**



As the insects search for food, they are dusted with powdery yellow pollen. They carry grains of pollen from one flower to the next. This allows the flowers to form fruits and seeds.



A flower is a bee
“magnet.” Its scent and
color attract bees and
other insects. To a bee,
flowers glow with
colors that you
cannot see.



A red flower may seem blue or purple to a bee . The flower looks different to the bee because the bee can see ultraviolet light. People cannot see this type of light.





A bumblebee gathers pollen as well as nectar when it visits flowers. The bee collects nectar in its crop, near its stomach. It collects pollen on its hind legs.

Brushy hairs on each hind leg form a sort of pollen “basket.” When the pollen baskets are full, the bee flies back to its nest.



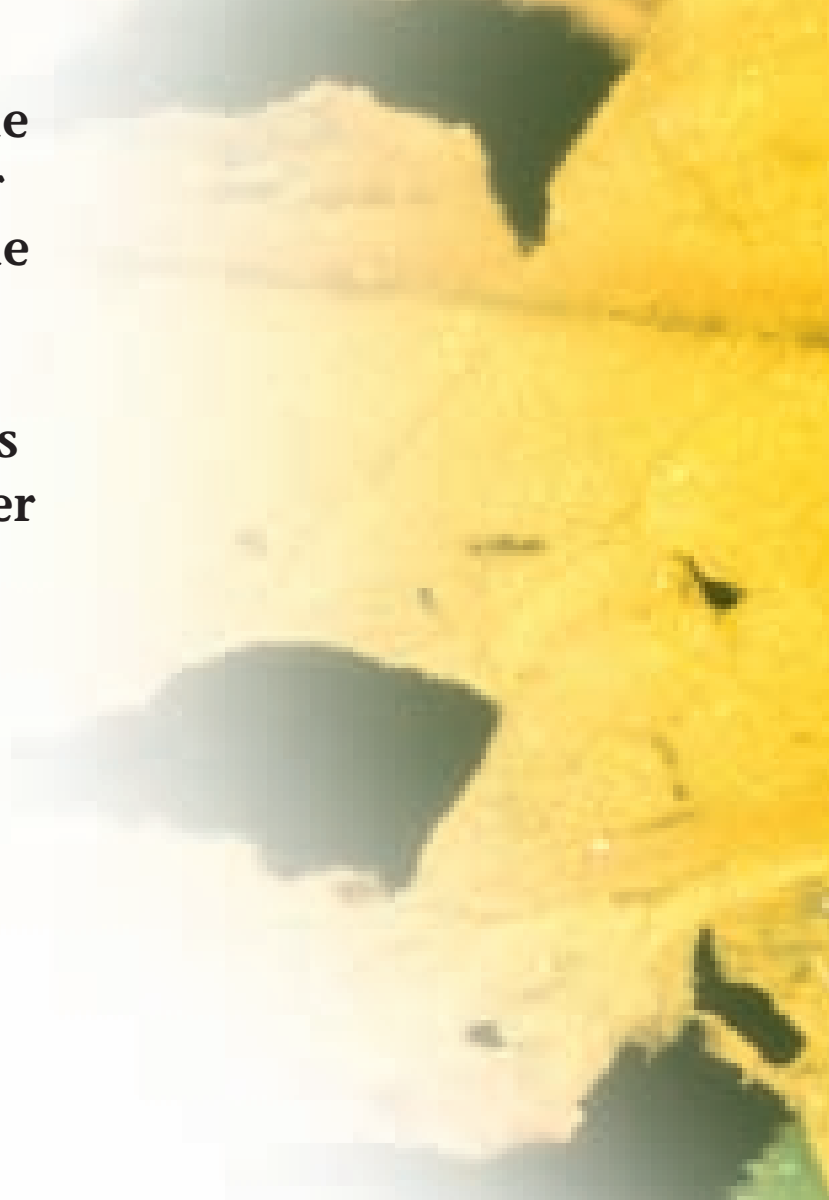
At the nest, the bumblebee shares the nectar and pollen with other members of its colony.



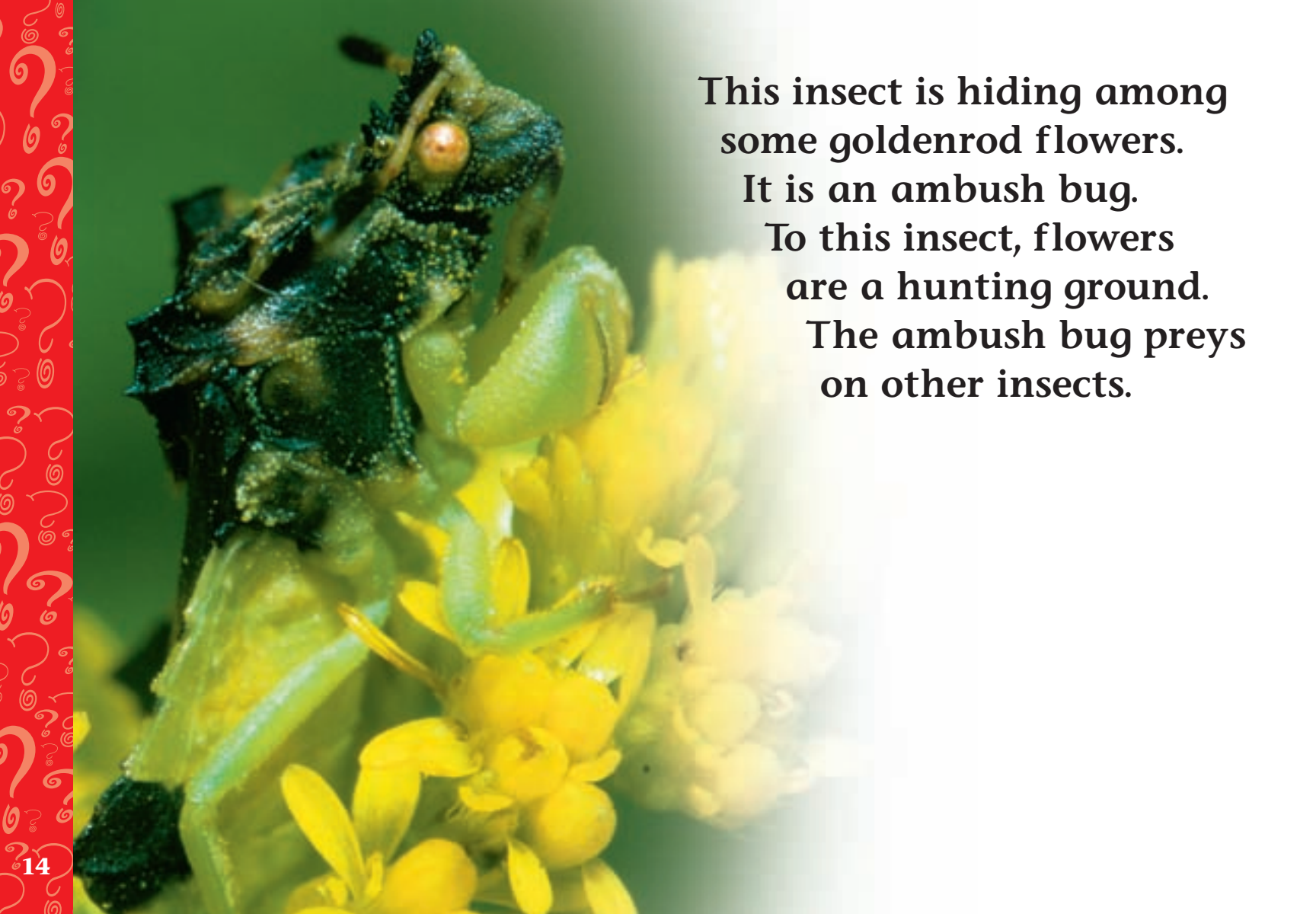
Bees store extra pollen and nectar in little wax chambers called honey pots. This stored food is very important. It will be eaten by young bees as they develop into adults.



This striped cucumber beetle is not interested in pollen or nectar. It has come to eat the petals of the flower. It has already chewed away big sections of the petals. Insects such as the striped cucumber beetle do not help plants. If these insects eat a plant's flowers, the plant will not be able to form seeds.







**This insect is hiding among
some goldenrod flowers.**

It is an ambush bug.

**To this insect, flowers
are a hunting ground.**

**The ambush bug preys
on other insects.**

When a fly or a beetle or some other insect visits the goldenrod, the ambush bug strikes. In an instant, the bug has caught its dinner.





Use the information in this book to answer some “how and why” questions.

- **Why do butterflies visit flowers?**
- **Why does a flower look different to a bee than to you?**
- **How does a bumblebee gather pollen?**
- **Why is stored food important to a bee colony?**
- **Why do striped cucumber beetles visit flowers?**
- **How does the ambush bug get its food?**