

Build an Insect

Create a clay insect sculpture and discover insect anatomy!

Over 95% of the pollinating animals on Earth are insects. Many of them have developed traits that help with pollination, including long tongues, fuzzy bodies, or special hairs that form pollen 'baskets' on their hind legs.

Left: Bumble bee anatomy. Image: Laurel Mufson NPS.

Materials Needed:

Air-dry clay*, pipe cleaners, popsicle stick, toothpicks, towel, water.

Optional: Other craft materials (foam, feathers, ribbon, etc), paint, markers.

*If air-dry clay is not available, you can use modeling clay or Play-Doh.

Instructions:

Step 1: Decide what kind of insect to build. Look at the pictures of pollinating insects on the next page for inspiration. How are they similar and different?

Step 2: Cover your work surface with a towel. Mold or carve the clay into an insect's three main body parts: head, thorax, and abdomen. Add details with a popsicle stick or toothpick.

Hint: To join two pieces of clay together, dip your finger in water and smooth out the spot where the two pieces meet.

Step 3: Make six legs from clay or pipe cleaners. Attach legs on each side of the body. All insects have six legs!

Step 4: Add eyes, a proboscis (mouth), antennae, and wings. You can make them from pipe cleaners or other craft materials.

Step 5: Let the clay dry for 24 to 48 hours.

Optional: Once the clay is dry, use markers or paint to color your insect!

All About Pollinators

What is Pollination?

Pollination is the act of transferring pollen grains from the male anther of a flower to the female stigma. The fertilized flower later yields fruit and seeds. Self-pollination occurs when pollen from a plant's anther is transferred to the same plant's