



Pollinator Mania Earth Day Event 2013



The playground is buzzing with running and laughing children. One group of kids is slowing down and shouting: 'We need more nectar, we're dying!'

On 26th of April, the Philipsburg School held an Earth Day event and students participated in informative pollinator programs, one of which was the game, *Pollinator Mania*. A simple but effective setup: the children (5-14 years old) are divided into two areas on the playing field; on each side of the field little, plastic flowers are placed and filled with colored water (nectar); each child is given a pipette as a special pollinator mouth in order to collect the nectar water and bring it to the team's nectar bucket. In the month before, the children have already learned all about their native pollinators. Now they pretended to be their favorite bee or butterfly and try to collect as much nectar for their team as possible in ten minutes.

One side of the playing field is scattered with lots of flowers that are all filled with nectar water, resembling a diverse natural habitat. However, the other side is set up as a big lawn with only flowers on the edges and a few dead ones in the middle that are not filled with water. The group of children on that side of the playground soon begin to complain: 'We don't have enough water! Why are there so few flowers on our side? What should we do?' We ask them: 'Well, what do you think would happen if you were a real pollinator?' 'Well, we would die!' Soon they are all lying on the ground with their arms and legs in the air. A battlefield of dead but very loudly giggling pollinators.

The flowers used in the game were made in cooperation with the Terra Verde Club of the University of Montana-Western. The sides of recycled water bottles and yogurt containers were cut down as flower petals and colored with permanent markers. The water was colored with food coloring and glass marbles kept the flowers from being blown away by the wind.

Afterwards the children take a look at pollinator posters and discuss the game. They learn how a good garden with native species can help butterflies and bee's to survive. Leaving a new generation eager and enthusiastic to help our pollinators survive. –*Written by Esther Brouwer, International Volunteer from the Netherlands.*

Year awarded: FY13
Project completion: 2013
Report number: 1 of 1
Expenditures: \$15

Partners: University of Montana-Western,
Terra Verde Club

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Pollinator (student) obtaining nectar with it's proboscis (pipette)



Pollinators foraging and dispensing nectar into nectar bucket



Pollinators assigned to the monoculture lawn lay dead from a lack of nectar

