



Pollinator Syndromes

“Pollinator Syndromes” describe flower characteristics, or traits, that may appeal to a particular type of pollinator. Such characteristics can be used to predict the type of pollinator that will aid the flower in successful reproduction. A combination of color, odor, quantity of nectar, location and type of pollen, and flower structure can each affect a potential pollinator’s ability to locate a flower and its food resources.

| Type of Pollinator | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|---|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Trait | Bat | Bee | Beetle | Bird | Butterfly | Fly | Moth | Wind |
| Color | White, green or purple | Bright white, yellow, blue, or UV | White or green | Scarlet, orange, red or white | Bright red and purple | Pale, or dark brown, purple | Pale red, purple, pink or white | Pale green, brown, or colorless |
| Nectar guides | None | Present | None | None | Present | None | None | None |
| Odor | Strong and musty; emitted at night | Fresh, mild, pleasant | None to strongly fruity or foul | None | Faint but fresh | Putrid | Strong sweet; emitted at night | None |
| Nectar | Abundant; somewhat hidden | Usually present | Sometimes present | Ample; deeply hidden | Ample; deeply hidden | Usually absent | Ample; deeply hidden | None |
| Pollen | Ample | Limited; often sticky, scented | Ample | Limited | Limited | Limited | Limited | Abundant; small, smooth |
| Flower Shape | Bowl shaped; closed during day | Shallow; with landing platform; tubular | Large and bowl-shaped | Large, funnel-like; strong perch support | Narrow tube with spur; wide landing pad | Shallow; funnel-like or complex with trap | Regular; tubular without a lip | Regular and small |
| | | | | | | | | |

Photo credits © Merlin Tuttle, Tom Eisner, Edward Ross, Arla Altman, Chris Carvalho, Paul Growald