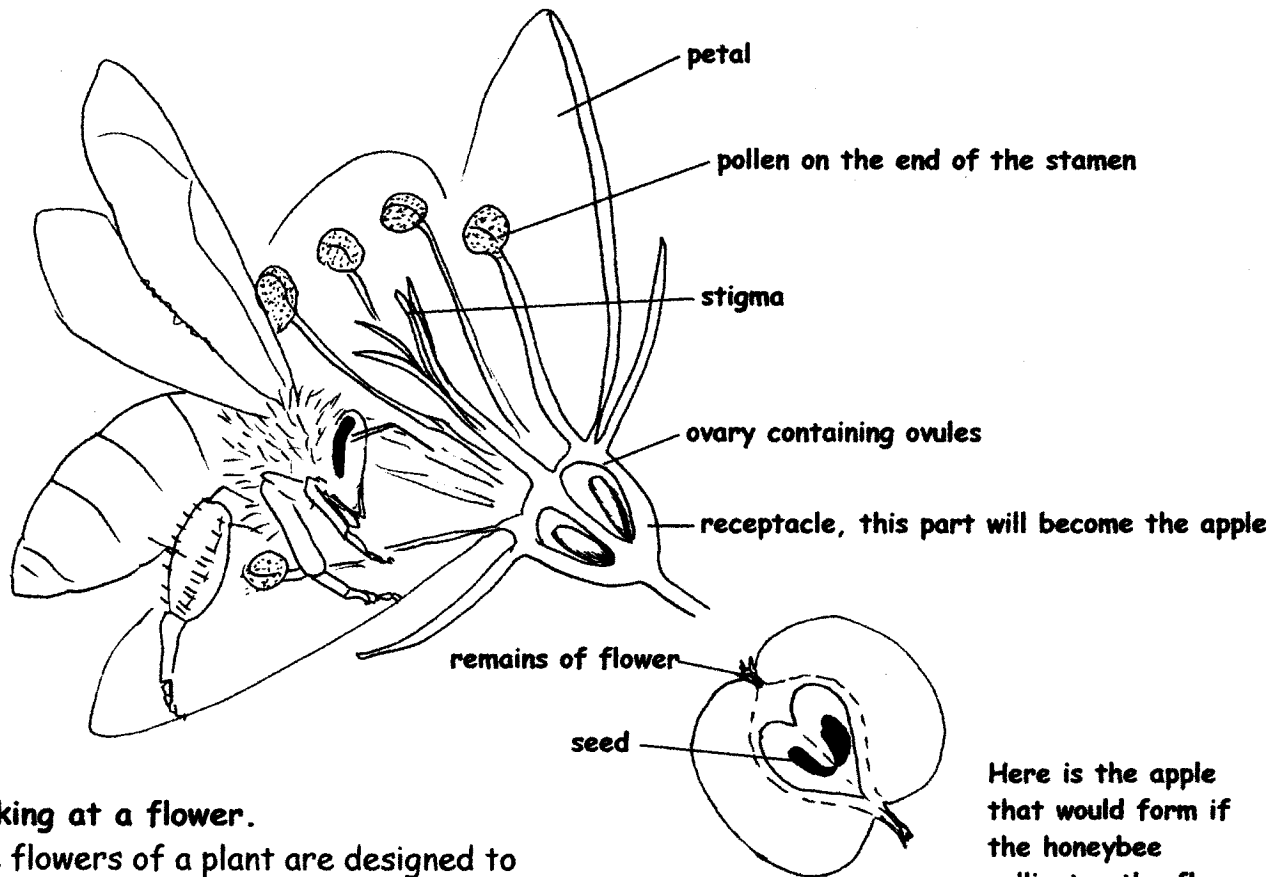


How seeds are made

Honeybee lands on apple flower



Looking at a flower.

The flowers of a plant are designed to produce the seeds which can grow into the next generation of the plant.

If you remove the petals on one side and look carefully with a magnifying glass you can see the ovary which contains one or more ovules which are the unfertilised seeds.

Each ovule contains a female sex cell. You might be able to find the ovules if you slice the front off the ovary with your finger nail.

Surrounding the ovary you should easily see the little stalks of the stamens, each has a blob of pollen on the end. Different sorts of flowers have different colours of pollen. When the pollen is ripe it becomes powdery and can be easily brushed off. The pollen grains contain the male sex cells.

How seeds are made.

Sticking up from the ovary you should see the stigma which is slightly sticky in order to catch any pollen grains that fall on to it. Putting pollen on to the stigma is called pollination.

When this happens the nuclei of the male sex cells from the pollen can move down into the ovary and join with the nuclei of the female sex cells in the ovules. The joining of a male and a female nucleus makes a seed form and is called fertilization. Fertilization can only take place if the pollen is from a flower of the same sort. In apple plants, after fertilization the receptacle and ovary grow to become a fruit. If you cut open any fruit you will normally find the seeds.