

plant – cannot complete their life cycles without each other. The moth deposits its eggs in the locule of the ovary and the flower, in turn, gets pollinated by the moth. The larvae of the moth come out of the eggs as the seeds start developing.

Why don't you observe some flowers of the following plants (or any others available to you): Cucumber, Mango, Peepal, Coriander, Papaya, Onion, Lobia, Cotton, Tobacco, Rose, Lemon, Eucalyptus, Banana? Try to find out which animals visit them and whether they could be pollinators. You'll have to patiently observe the flowers over a few days and at different times of the day. You could also try to see whether there is any correlation in the characteristics of a flower to the animal that visits it. Carefully observe if any of the visitors come in contact with the anthers and the stigma as only such visitors can bring about pollination. Many insects may consume pollen or the nectar without bringing about pollination. Such floral visitors are referred to as pollen/nectar robbers. You may or may not be able to identify the pollinators, but you will surely enjoy your efforts!

Outbreeding Devices : Majority of flowering plants produce hermaphrodite flowers and pollen grains are likely to come in contact with the stigma of the same flower. Continued self-pollination result in inbreeding depression. Flowering plants have developed many devices to discourage self-pollination and to encourage cross-pollination. In some species, pollen release and stigma receptivity are not synchronised. Either the pollen is released before the stigma becomes receptive or stigma becomes receptive much before the release of pollen. In some other species, the anther and stigma are placed at different positions so that the pollen cannot come in contact with the stigma of the same flower. Both these devices prevent autogamy. The third device to prevent inbreeding is self-incompatibility. This is a genetic mechanism and prevents self-pollen (from the same flower or other flowers of the same plant) from fertilising the ovules by inhibiting pollen germination or pollen tube growth in the pistil. Another device to prevent self-pollination is the production of unisexual flowers. If both male and female flowers are present on the same plant such as castor and maize (monoecious), it prevents autogamy but not geitonogamy. In several species such as papaya, male and female flowers are present on different plants, that is each plant is either male or female (dioecy). This condition prevents both autogamy and geitonogamy.

Pollen-pistil Interaction : Pollination does not guarantee the transfer of the right type of pollen (compatible pollen of the same species as the stigma). Often, pollen of the wrong type, either from other species or from the same plant (if it is self-incompatible), also land on the stigma. The pistil has the ability to recognise the pollen, whether it is of the right type (compatible) or of the wrong type (incompatible). If it is of the right type, the pistil accepts the pollen and promotes post-pollination events that