

Pumpkin Pollination

By Wendi Epps

Fall is just around the corner, which means the changing of the leaves, cool and refreshing breezes, and big, beautiful pumpkins. The Gardens of Southeastern North Carolina has planted a pumpkin patch and it's so exciting to watch them grow! Each week the field looks different, the plants are more full, and vibrant orange and yellow flowers have started blooming. We want to make sure we've got lots of pumpkins ready for our Fall Festival on October 22, so we've invited all of the pollinators in the area to come visit the pumpkin patch!



Male Flower - Single Stamen

Pollination is an important factor in whether or not you have a full crop. In order for the plant to form a pumpkin, they depend mainly on bees to bring pollen from the male flowers to the female flowers. Like many other flowers that are monoecious, pumpkin plants produce flowers of both sexes on the same vine. You can easily tell the sex of a pumpkin bloom in one of two ways. The first is by looking inside of the flower at the pollen building structure in the center. Male flowers have a single stamen in the center and their longer stems lift them

up and away from the vine to tempt the bees, while female flowers have multiple pistils topped with stigmas in their centers. Females also have a small round embryo on the stem under the flower, while the males have a regular stem. Male flowers bloom first, giving the bees a chance to work the plants into their regular route, and the female flowers bloom one to two weeks after the males so they can be pollinated more quickly. Pumpkin flowers don't last long once they've bloomed, they only last about 4 hours, so it's important to pollinate them as quickly as possible. Once pollination has successfully

occured, the embryo just below the female flower will begin to swell and if the conditions are right, it will eventually become a pumpkin.

We'll be posting photos on our social media periodically as the pumpkins get bigger and bigger, and at the same time, we're also keeping an eye on our mums! The fields in the nursery are a beautiful sea of green plants with big buds already forming. We can't wait to see all of the color fall will bring!

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Social Media Post:



Female Flower - Multiple Pistols



Female Flower - Embryo

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flowers are pollinated by visiting our blog at

<https://thegardensofsenc.com/news/f/pumpkin-pollination>.

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