

FEATURED

UC Master Gardeners hold pollination presentation

By Kalin Turner
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Cassandra and Luisa Aguilar listen and learn about the roles bees play in our desert ecosystem.
By Kalin Turner

IMPERIAL – To help educate the local youths of the Imperial Valley, the UC Master Gardener Program hosted a pollination presentation at the Imperial Public Library on July 6 to help answer the question “What do bees need?”.

UC Master Gardeners have been working in the Valley to spread research-based information about home horticulture and pest management to the public. This public service and outreach program is under the guidance of the University of California, Agriculture, and Natural Resources.

For this program, the UC Master Gardeners collaborated with the SPROUT program at the Imperial Public Library. The SPROUT program was funded in 2021 by the California State Library Grant to help provide families with early learning opportunities. The word SPROUT stands for Sing, Play, Read, Observe, Uniquely Together.

“At our event today, we have members of our team who have completed the 15-week training that is required to help learn about growing plants in the low desert. Today we will be able to provide children with the knowledge they need to understand why bees are so important for the growth of plants and how pollination is the key factor that enables the growth of different plants we find in the desert, said Master Gardener Program Coordinator Kristen Michelle Salgado.

One of the facts that the children learned was how bees see different colors.

“One thing that we have learned about bees is that they are attracted to certain flowers because of the types of colors that they are able to see,” said Master Gardener Lea Davis. “One of the flowers that you will notice bees do not populate are red ones because, due to research, we have learned that bees cannot see the color red.”

The children also learned how the bees survive in the hives despite the hot temperatures they face in our desert.

“The bees need up to a gallon of water a day to help insulate their hives,” said Davis. The water brought to the hives not only helps control the temperature but also maintains the necessary humidity that helps with the storage of food.

With knowledge under their belts, the children had the chance to participate in a project to help put their knowledge to use. The project consisted of a bee made from popsicle sticks and yellow and black pompoms. With bees in hand, the children began to create paper flowers with golden beads at the center that represent the nectar that is used to create the honey in their hives. This activity also gave children a visual of how pollen is transferred from flower to flower as the bees fly around and look for nectar.

"By creating this craft, we are going to look at how bees move from flower to flower, collecting the necessary ingredients they need to create honey and pollinate other flowers to help with the production of new flowers," said Salgado.



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