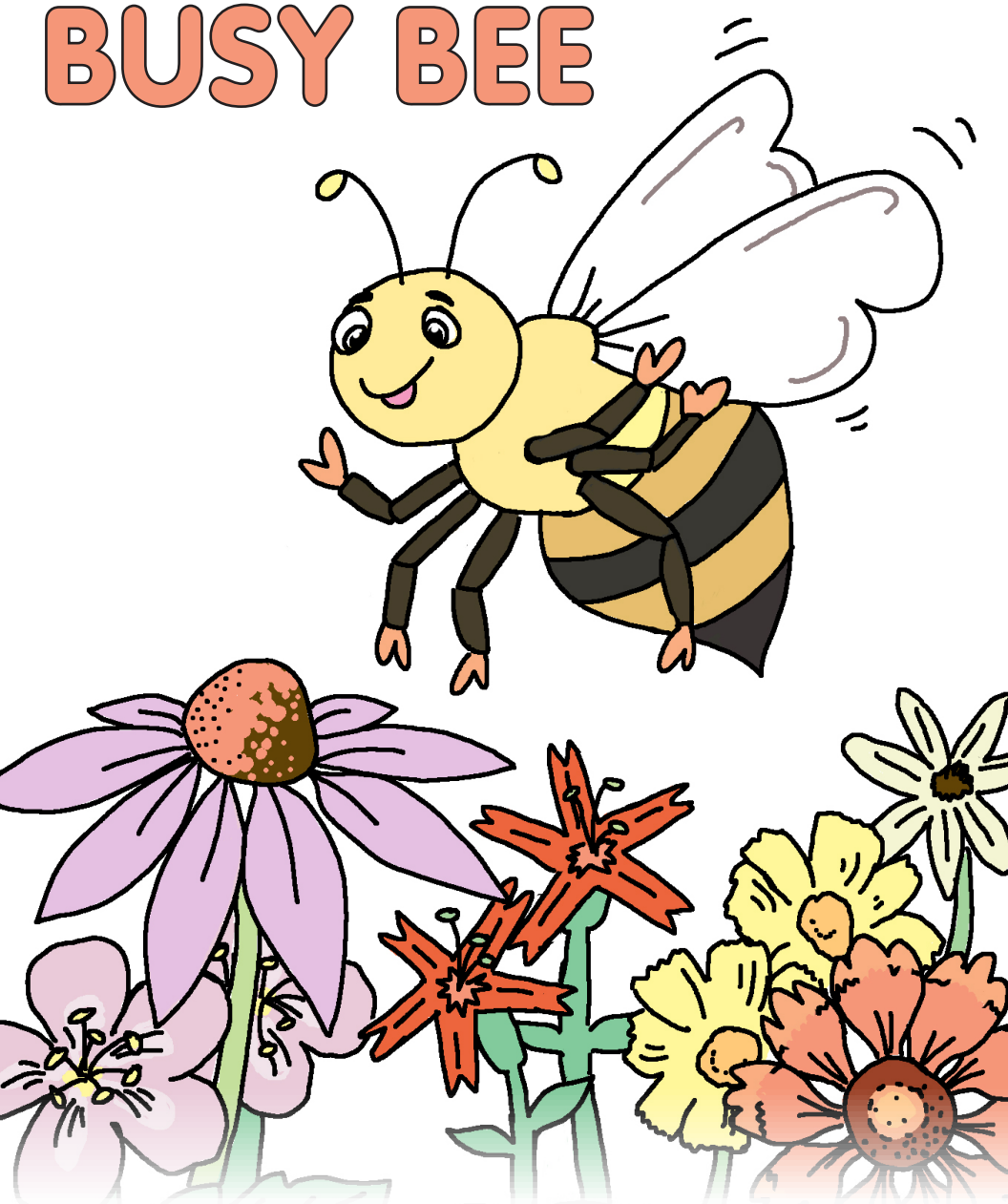
BERTIE THE BUSY BEE



EPA
United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

This is a message for parents, caregivers and teachers:

Bertie the Busy Bee is a story that teaches children about pollinator protection.

Pollinators are vital to a healthy ecosystem. They are responsible for over 100 food crops in the United States. Improper pesticide use on agricultural lands and at home can lead to harm or death for many pollinators.

Because children have unique behaviors and biology as compared to adults, they are more susceptible to negative effects resulting from pesticide misuse and exposure.

Bertie the Busy Bee teaches children about the importance of pollinators, easy ways to create pollinator habitats in their communities and pollinator warnings on pesticide containers.

WARNING: CHILDREN SHOULD NEVER HANDLE OR APPLY PESTICIDES. ALWAYS STORE PESTICIDES OUT OF THE REACH OF CHILDREN IN A LOCKED CONTAINER OR SPACE ACCORDING TO LABEL DIRECTIONS.

Pesticides Team
U.S. EPA Region 4

Bertie the Busy Bee

This publication was developed
by the EPA Region 4 Pesticides Team:

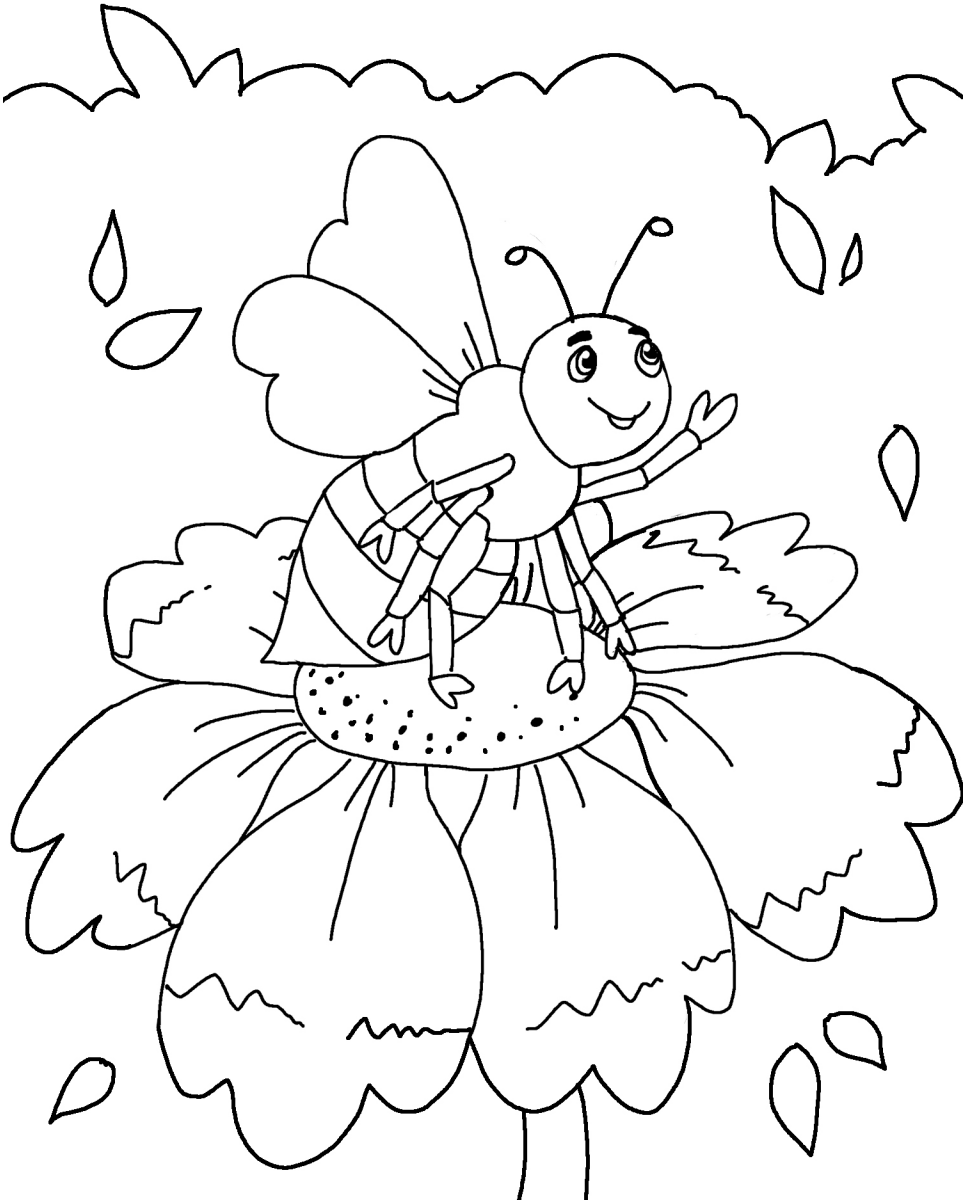
Primary Authors: Rose Yeley and Savannah Merritt

Edited by: Donnette Sturdivant, Pat Livingston,
Randy Dominy and Richard Corbett

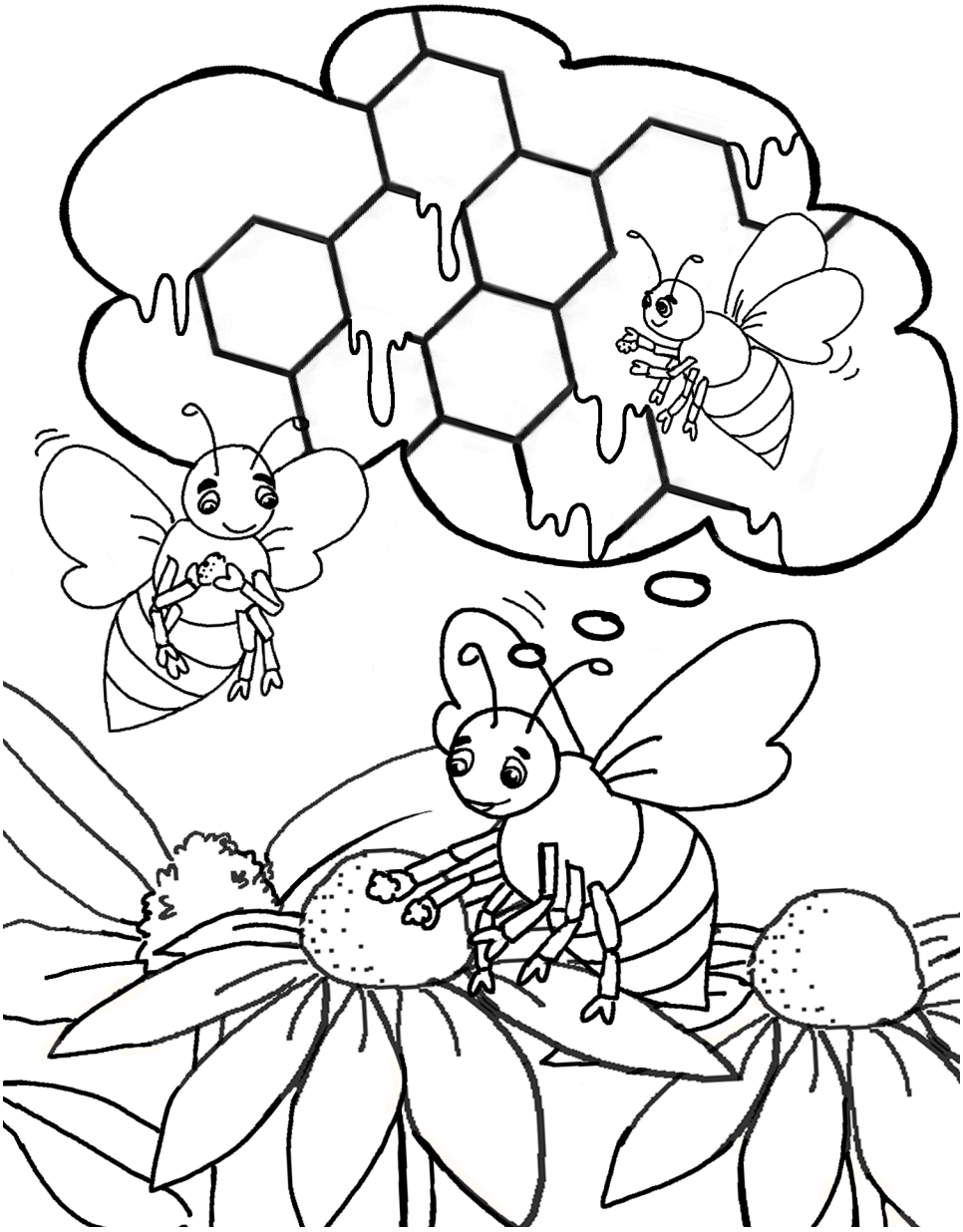
EPA Region 4 also wishes to thank:
Illustrator: Claire Burke, Skeo Solutions

"I'm going to play in the garden,"
Harper called out.

“Whoa! Look, it’s a bee! Hi busy bee.
I’m Harper. What are you doing?”

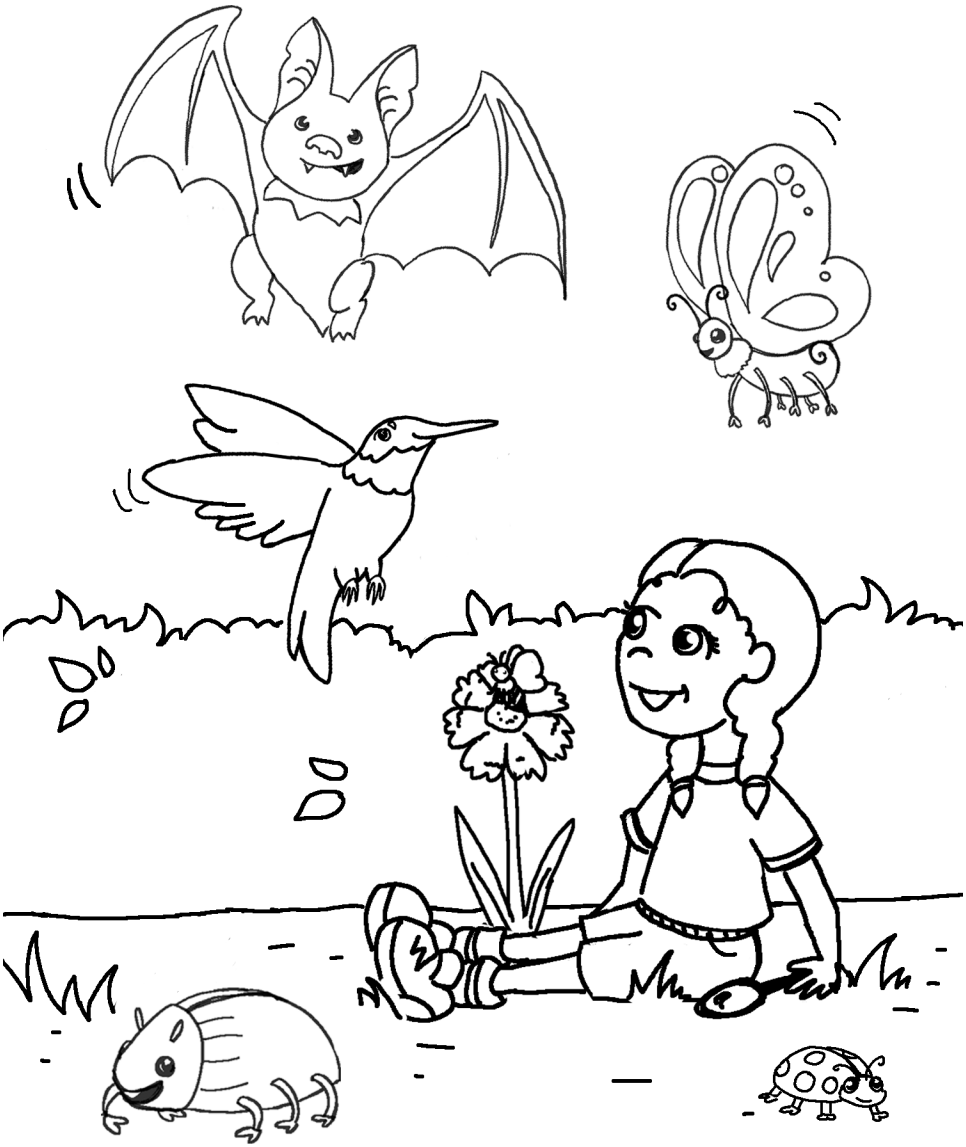


“Hi Harper! I’m Bertie the Busy Bee,” said Bertie. “I came to visit all of the flowers in your beautiful garden.”



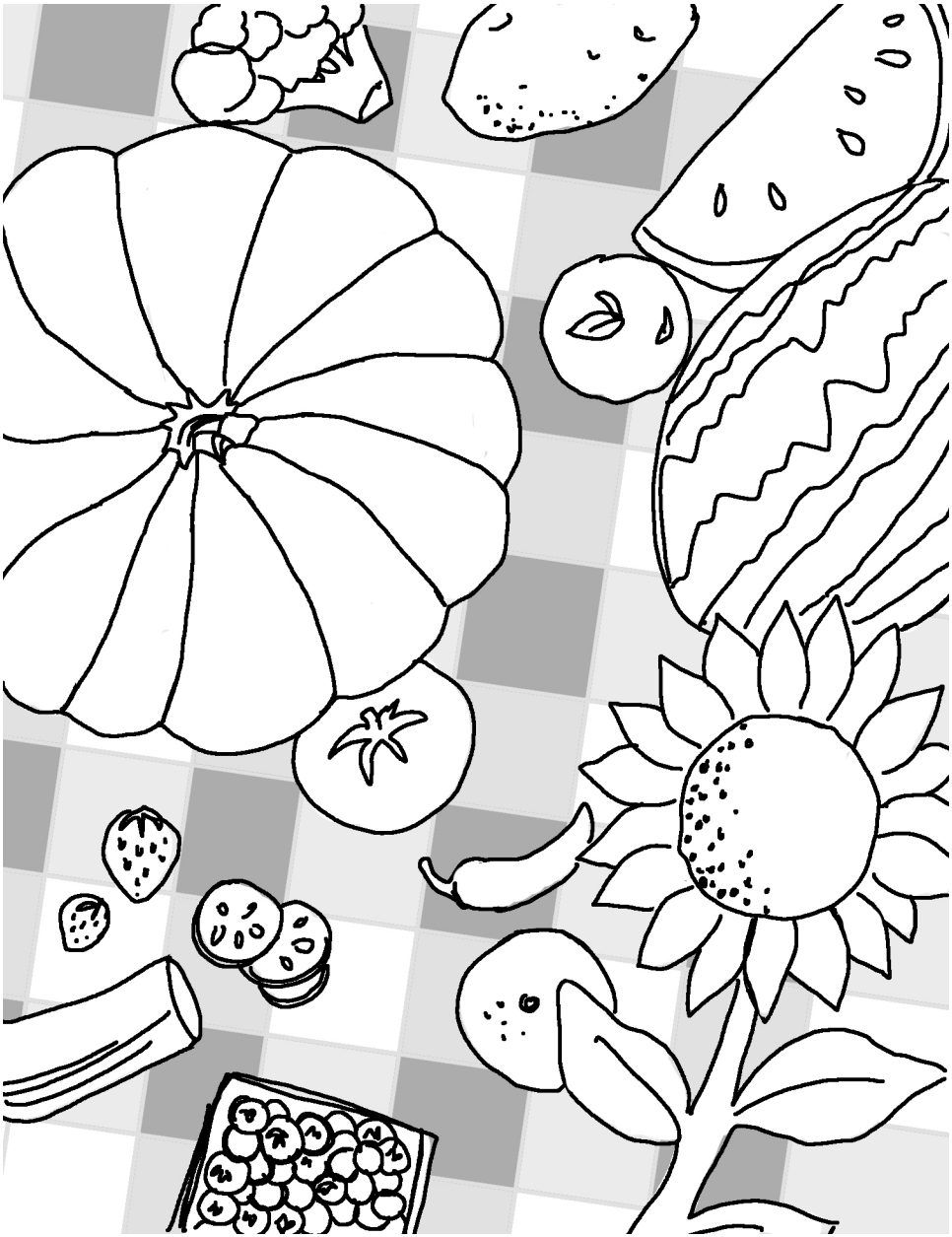
“I love when gardens have different kinds of <u>native flowers</u> because I like to collect <u>nectar</u> to make yummy honey!”

“Some of my favorite flowers are goldenrods, purple coneflowers and milkweeds. They grow here in the Southeast, where we live.”



“I am a <u>pollinator</u>! Other pollinators are birds, bats, beetles and butterflies,” Bertie continued.

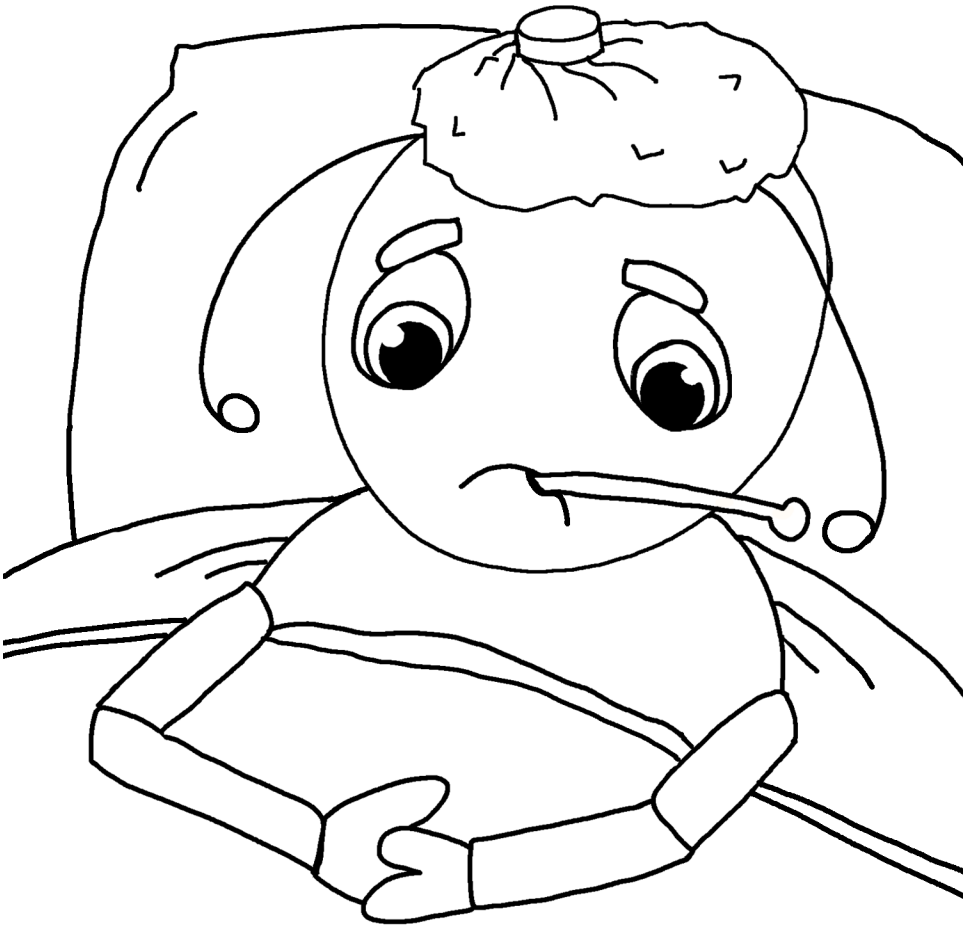
“We visit flowers and move pollen from plant to plant. This is called pollination.”



“Some plants need pollinators to make food for people! We help grow one out of every three bites of food by pollinating crops.”

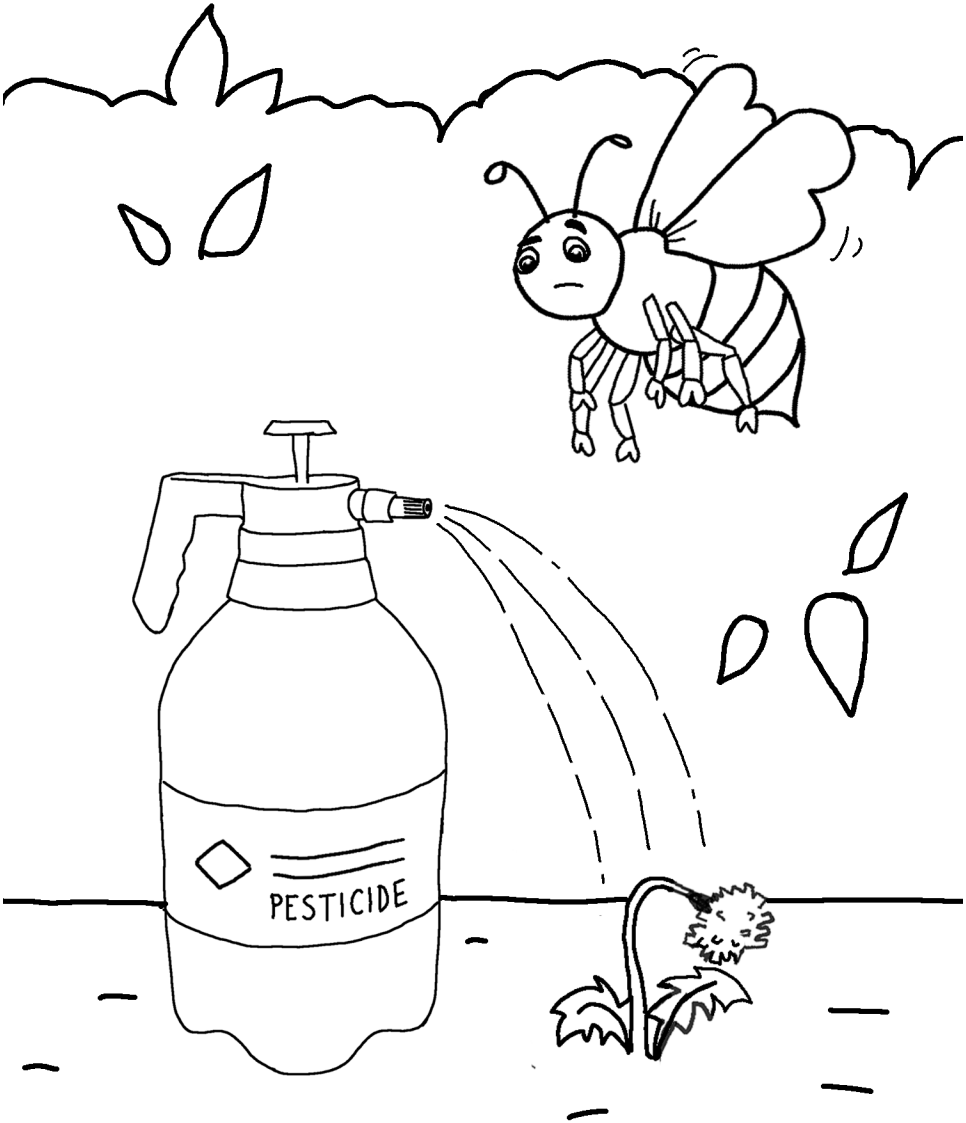
“Good bugs and plants, like ladybugs, garden spiders and clovers, help pollinators maintain a healthy ecosystem.”

“Oh no! That bee over there doesn’t look very busy,” Harper said. “Is something wrong?”



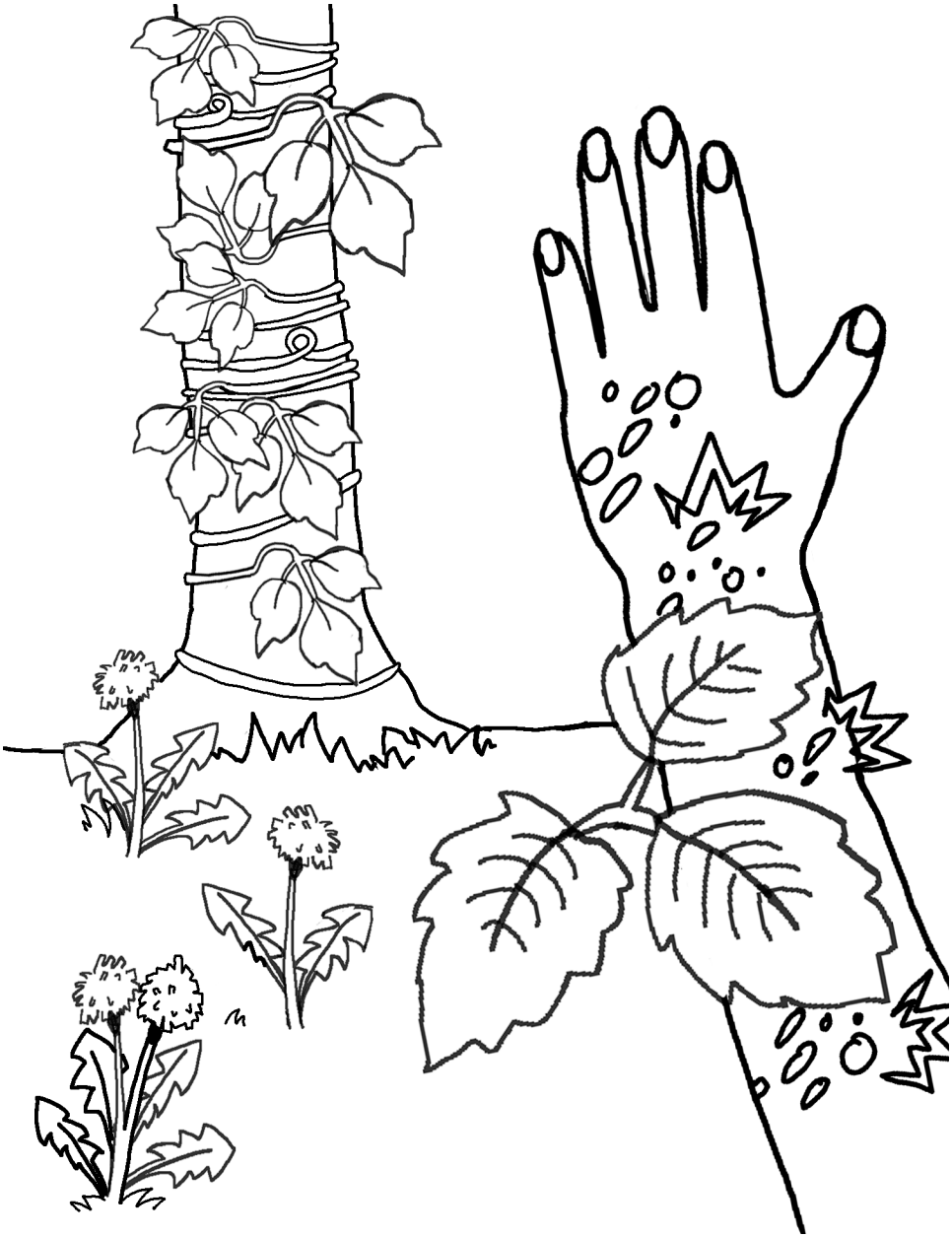
“That bee touched a <u>pesticide</u> in another garden,” Bertie said sadly. “Some pesticides can make me and my bee friends very sick.”

“What is a pesticide?” Harper asked Bertie.

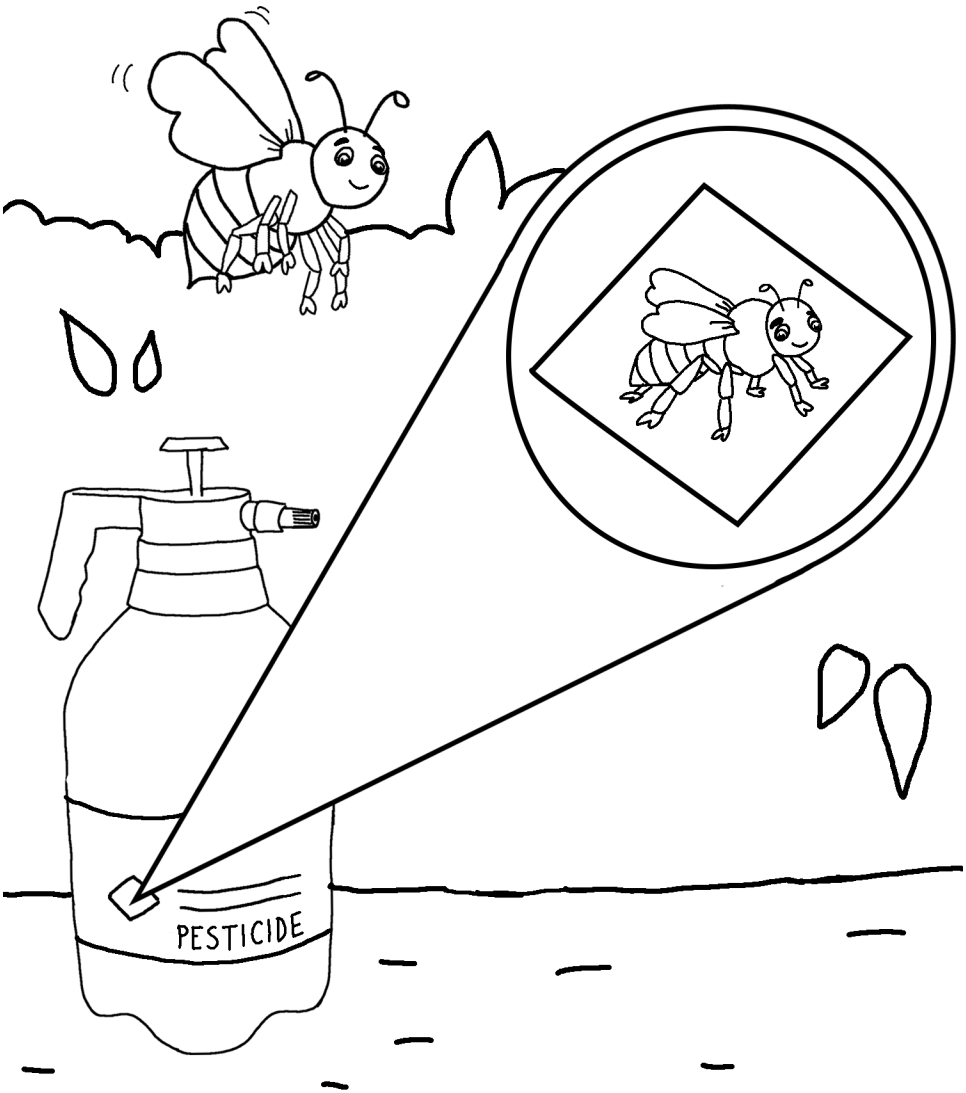


“A pesticide is something that gets rid of unwanted bugs or plants,” Bertie replied.

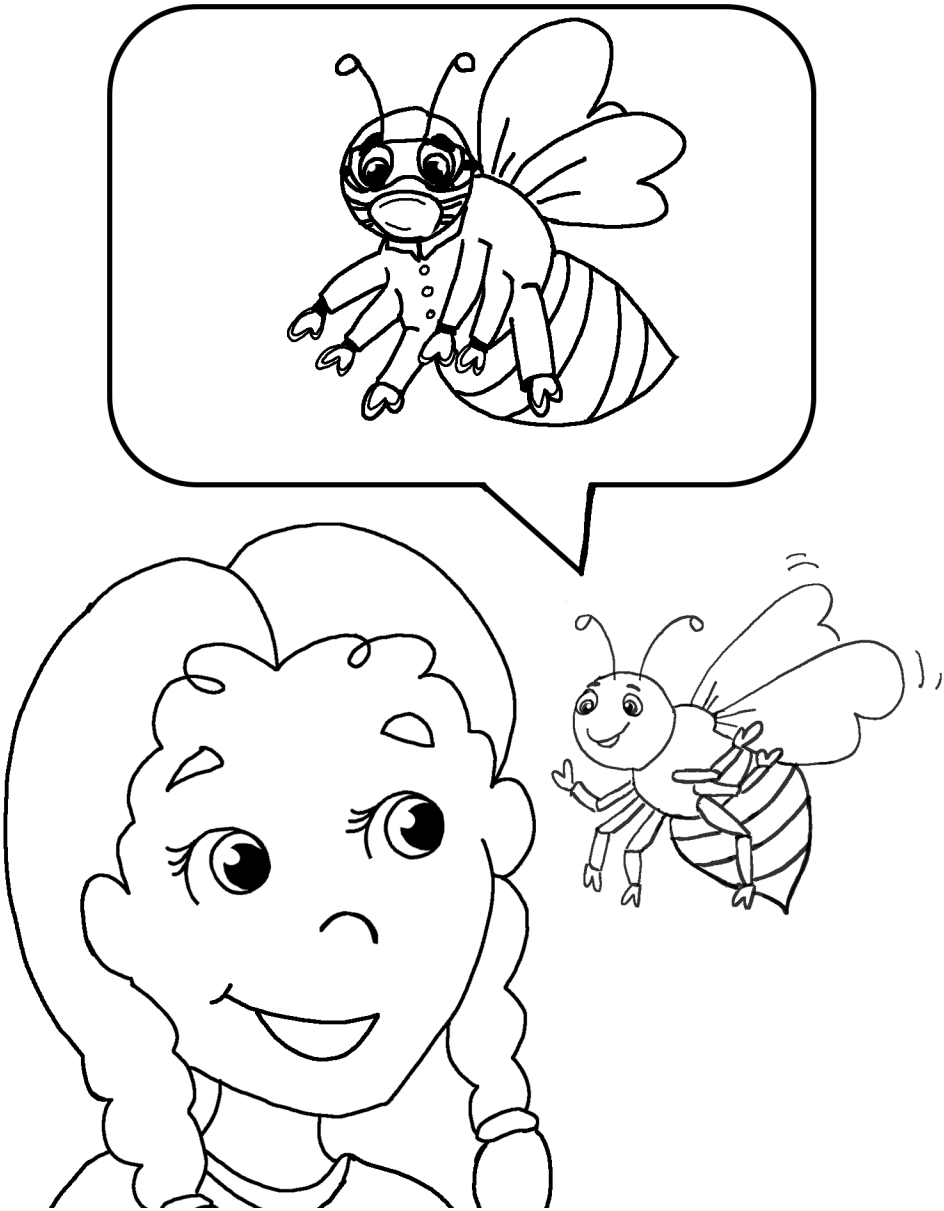
“Some bugs, like mosquitos, aphids and fire ants, may bite you or eat your plants. That’s not very fun to be around!”



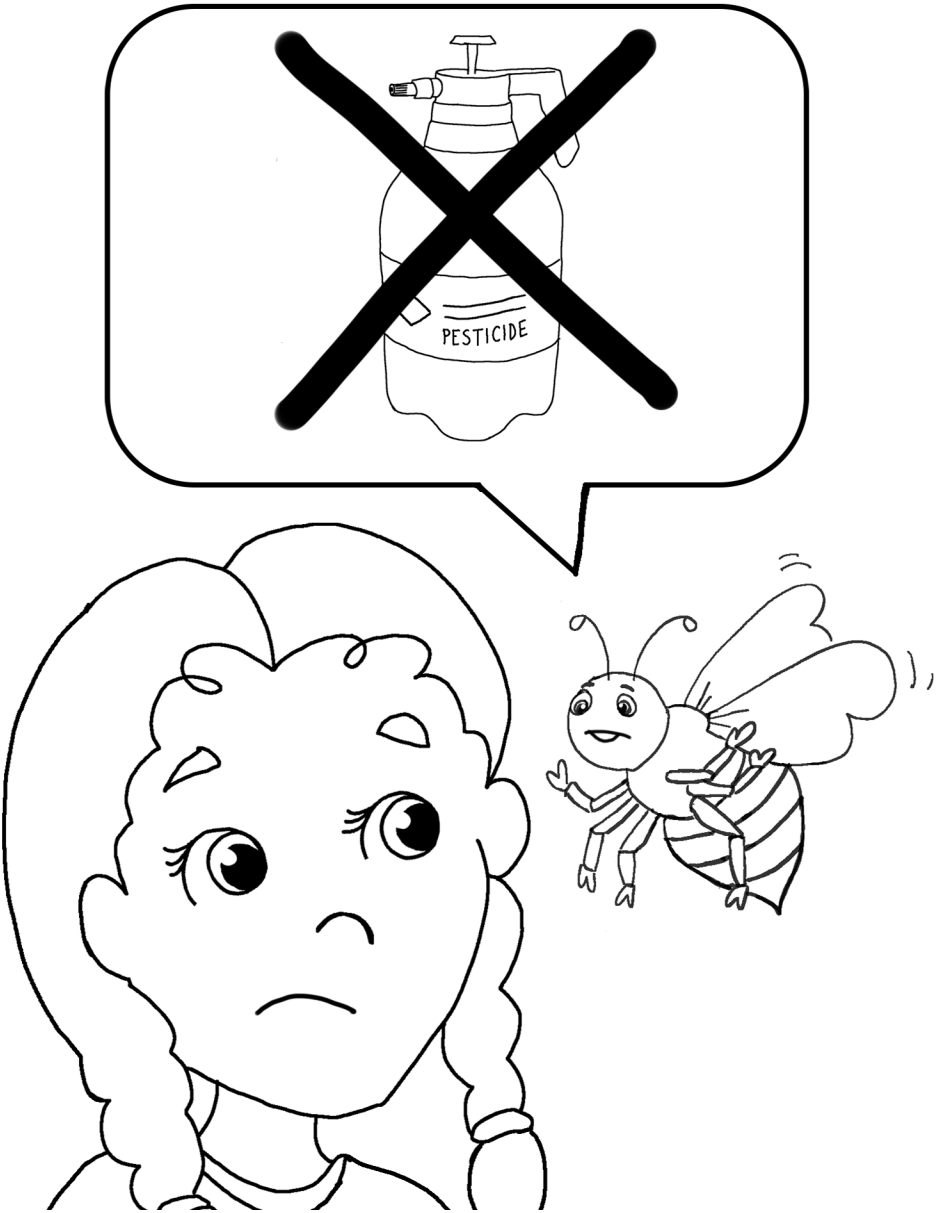
“And some plants,” Bertie continued, “like dandelions, kudzu and poison ivy can make you itchy or they grow where they aren’t supposed to.”



"If your grownups need to use pesticides to get rid of unwanted bugs or plants, they should always look for the <u>Bee Box</u> on the label," Bertie explained.

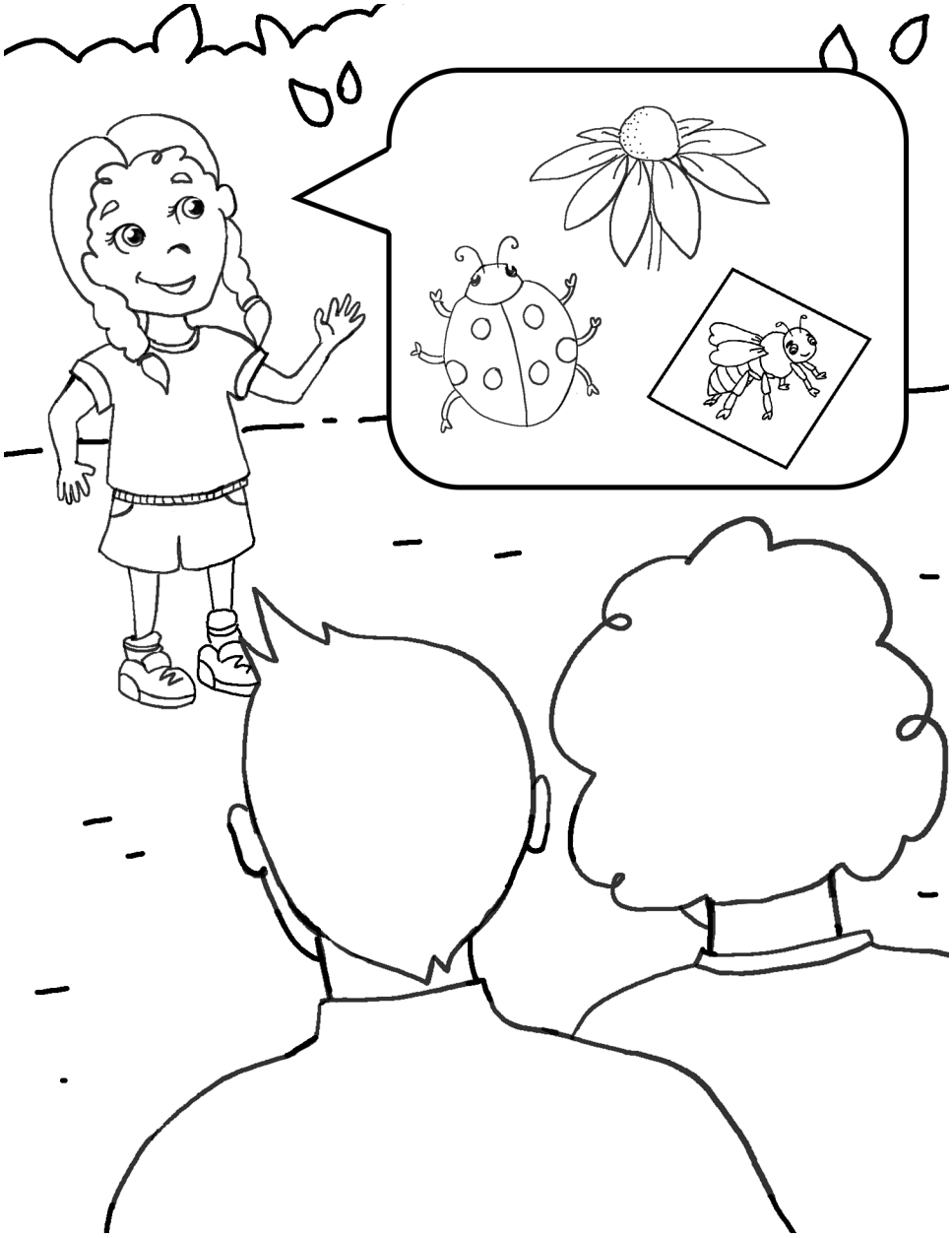


“The Bee Box tells them how to be extra careful when using pesticides near pollinators.”



“Pesticides and kids do NOT mix! Kids should stay away from pesticides. That’s grownup stuff!” Bertie said.

“I’m just a kid,” Harper replied. She felt worried. “How can I help pollinators?”



“Talk with your grownups about which bugs and plants are good for the garden,” Bertie said, “and about the Bee Box!”

Harper felt better. She was excited! “Thank you, Bertie the Busy Bee,” she said. “I have learned so much today. I will talk with my grownups about pollinators and pesticide safety!”

“We will continue to grow beautiful flowers for you to pollinate!”

KEYWORDS

Native Flower: a flower that originated in a local ecosystem.

Nectar: a sweet liquid that plants use to attract pollinators.

Pollinator: an animal that helps pollinate plants.

Pollen: a fine, powdery grain that causes some plants to produce seeds.

Pollination: when pollen moves from one flower to another flower to create a seed.

Ecosystem: all of the living and nonliving things in an area.

Pesticide: a substance that gets rid of pests, such as unwanted plants and animals.

Bee Box: a special box located on a pesticide label with instructions for applying pesticides near pollinators.

ATTENTION ADULTS

If you believe a bee incident should be investigated for potential enforcement action, report it to your state pesticide agency or EPA at beekill@epa.gov.

If you suspect that a pesticide poisoning has occurred, call Poison Control IMMEDIATELY at 1-800-222-1222. There are 55 poison control centers located across the country. They can be reached **24 hours a day**.

For more information on pesticides, contact the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) at 1-800-858-7378 or npic.orst.edu. NPIC has translation capabilities into over 240 languages.

Visit EPA's website to learn more about pollinator protection: epa.gov/pollinator-protection.

ATTENTION ADULTS

Applying a pesticide in a manner inconsistent with its labelling is a violation of federal law.

If you are applying a pesticide, **always read and follow instructions found on the label**. The label is a legal document affixed to the pesticide container and lists instructions for using and storing the pesticide.

Always store pesticides out of reach of children in their original containers. Tightly close and seal containers when not actively using the pesticide.

Pesticides that affect pollinators may have a “Bee Box” on the label. This section includes additional application restrictions intended to lessen risks to bees and other pollinators. Pay special attention to this section when applying a pesticide in a manner that may expose pollinators.

PESTICIDE CONTACTS IN THE SOUTHEAST

Alabama
Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries
agi.alabama.gov

Florida
Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
fdacs.gov

Georgia
Georgia Department of Agriculture
agr.georgia.gov

Kentucky
Kentucky Department of Agriculture
kyagr.com

Mississippi
Mississippi Department of Agriculture & Commerce
mdac.ms.gov

North Carolina
North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
ncagr.gov

South Carolina
Clemson University Department of Pesticide Regulation
clemson.edu/public/regulatory/pesticide-regulation/index.html

Tennessee
Tennessee Department of Agriculture
tn.gov/agriculture

epa.gov