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## The Growth of the New England Aster

Emily R. H  
*North Hampton School*

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## The Growth of the New England Aster

In the back of North Hampton School, on September 30th, my 7th grade class was scavenging through the woods. It was 1:00pm, and there were many mushrooms, trees, and



worms out in the open. People were sketching and taking notes about all sorts of different things. With my teacher's permission, I went a bit farther into the woods, and found a huge area filled with flowers. One particular flower caught my eye: the New England Aster.

The New England Aster is a beautiful flower that grows in all different colors. They range from purple (the most common color) to yellow (the rarest). An article by Edie Parnum shows how important New England Asters are: "The flowers are an important nectar source for

Monarch butterflies during their fall migration". The article also shows that the particular type of Aster is also attracted by "Sweat bees, leafcutter bees, carpenter bees, mining bees, and bumble bees" (Parnum).

When I looked closely at the flowers, I realized that only some of the buds were fully bloomed. There were three buds on one stem, and one of the three was fully bloomed, one was halfway there, and the other was closed up all of the way. At that moment, I was incredibly intrigued. I wondered, why don't all of the flowers bloom at the same time?

After that, I did some online digging. I looked at many websites, and took time to answer my question. In an article about the flower growth cycle, Mark Danenhauer wrote, "...flowers bloom at different times of the year in order to give themselves the best chance at getting pollinated and reproducing". After I read this, I did not understand the meaning. I thought about it, and not until I got home did I understand. Coming off the bus, I saw bees buzzing around the flowers in front of my house. I suddenly realized what the answer to my question was.

If every human was born at the same time, there would be extreme overpopulation, and little to none of us would survive. But, because we have different birthdays, we have a much higher chance at survival. Amazingly, it is the same thing with flowers and plants. When flowers bloom at different times, it gives them a higher growth and pollination rate. Also, having flowers all year round helps a lot of the bees live through all of the seasons. This means that having different flowers at different times is better for the bees and flowers.



Throughout this process, I answered my question and learned all about pollination and growth cycles. I figured out that flowers bloom at different times for higher chances of pollination and survival. I also learned that the answer to my question applies to nearly every living thing. Because monarch butterflies migrate at different times in the fall, possibly the New England Asters help to support the late migrants. To research this further, I could look at where the late migrants go, and see if that area has New England

Asters. I could also research which flowers and plants monarchs use to pollinate and survive. As fascinating as it is, that is a question for another day, one nature note at a time.

## Citations

barb. *New England Aster* | *BackyardsforNature.Org*. 26 Apr. 2017, [backyardsfornature.org/](http://backyardsfornature.org/).

Danenhauer, Mark. "Why Do Flowers Bloom at Different Times of the Year? - Jake's Nature Blog." *Jake's Nature Blog*, 20 June 2018, [jakesnatureblog.com/2015/06/01/why-do-flowers-bloom-at-different-times-of-the-year/](http://jakesnatureblog.com/2015/06/01/why-do-flowers-bloom-at-different-times-of-the-year/).