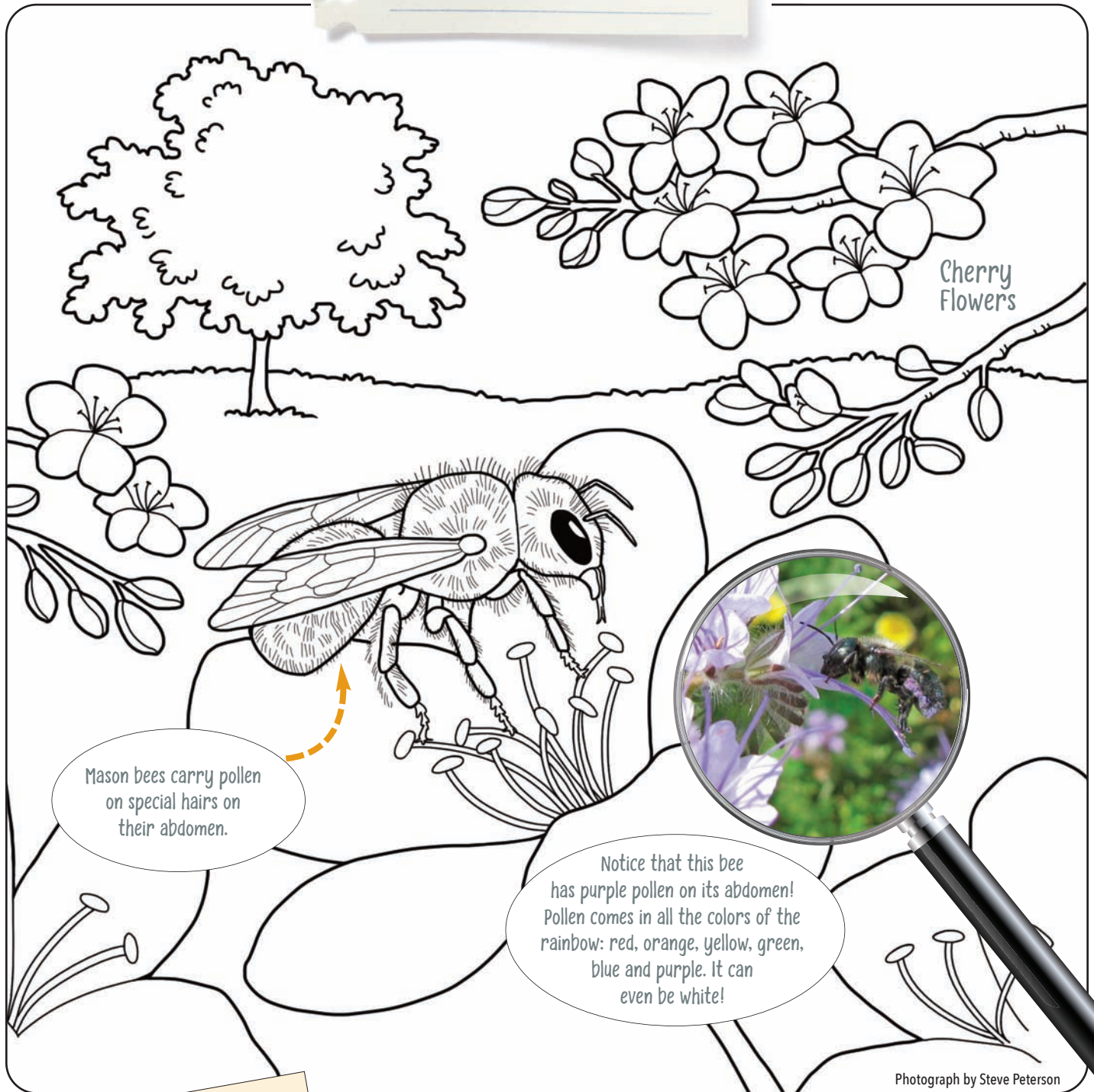


Mason Bees

Genus: *Osmia*



Mason bees carry pollen on special hairs on their abdomen.

Notice that this bee has purple pollen on its abdomen! Pollen comes in all the colors of the rainbow: red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple. It can even be white!

Photograph by Steve Peterson

Field Notes:

Mason bees belong to the genus *Osmia* (pronounced OZ-me-a). Some are pollinators of almonds, apples, blueberries, raspberries, and cherries, as well as many wild plants. They are called mason bees because they use mud or clay to build their nests, just like a mason, which is someone who uses bricks and mortar to build homes and other buildings. They are small to medium-sized bees that are colored in bright metallic blues and greens and sometimes black. In Oregon, they are most often used to pollinate cherries. They work quickly: In the same amount of time, one female mason bee can pollinate three times as many flowers as a single honey bee.



The next time you eat a cherry, thank a mason bee!