Oil Beetle Life Cycle

Learn the stages in an oil beetle life cycle with this fun exercise. Cut out the coloured boxes, jumble them up and then lay them out on the table in the right order.

(for younger children—the life cycle boxes should fall in the order of the colours of the rainbow)

An adult female oil beetle burrows in a sandy area close to a colony of solitary bees.

The female lays up to 1000 eggs which take 2-3 weeks to develop.

The larvae hatch out into a louse-like stage. The larvae burrow out and climb up a flower stem.

A bee visiting the flower becomes covered in larvae. The larvae are carried back to the bee’s nest.

The larvae drop off and eat the bee’s eggs. Then they change into a grub-like stage.

The larvae moult 3 times and pupate inside the bee’s nest and stay there until the following year.

Adult oil beetles emerge and look for a mate.