

## Hummingbirds

Attracting hummingbirds to your garden is as easy as either planting certain flowers and/or putting up a hummingbird feeder. The diet of hummingbirds requires both an energy source (nectar) and a protein source (small insects). The benefit of bringing these busy birds to your garden is not only eating small insects but also to act as a pollinator: when they feed, their forehead rubs against the stamens and pistils collecting pollen. They then move from flower to flower, pollinating as they go.

### Hummingbird feeder/nectar:

Before you add nectar to your feeder, wash with warm soapy water. Inspect the feeding ports, making certain they are not clogged or blocked.

You do not need to buy premade nectar.

To make your own nectar, mix 1-part white sugar with 4 parts hot water. Your solution is ready once all the sugar has dissolved. I boil my nectar just to make sure all the sugar is dissolved, let it cool before adding to feeder.

Do not use artificial sweeteners or honey.

Do not add red food coloring: Most hummingbird feeders have a red base or top, plenty of color to attract a hummingbird.

When hanging your feeder, find an area that is slightly shaded, near something the hummingbird can perch on between feedings. An area near flowers that hummingbirds visit naturally will also draw them to your feeder. Keep the feeder out of the sun.

Keep an eye on your nectar as it is fairly weather dependent. Change your nectar every few days when it's hot and humid, less frequently in cooler weather.

Think about hanging multiple feeders around your yard. This will attract more hummingbirds and prevents a bully from scaring away other birds.

Hummingbirds typically love red and tubular flowers, however, don't let that criteria limit your choices. They also respond well to pink, orange, and yellow flowers.

Here are some plants that attract hummingbirds:

Peruvian Lily Plants(*Alstroemeria*): Bloom every year.

Geraniums (*Pelargonium x hortorum*): multiple colors, easy to grow.

Bottlebrush Bush (*Callistemon spp.*) Also a dwarf variety.

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*): Very low maintenance.

Red Hot Poker (*Kniphofia uvaria*): Comes back every year with very little effort.

Mexican Fuchsia Sage (*Salvia iodantha*): Grows to be a large shrub: appears to be a hummingbird magnet.

Zinnia (*Zinnia elegans*): Beautiful array of colors, very attractive to hummingbirds.

Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia davidii*): attracts both butterflies and hummingbirds. Grows well in our zone.

Trumpet Vine (*Campsis radicans*). A favorite of hummingbirds: the shape of the flower accommodates the birds' long tongue.