



# Attracting Hummingbirds 101

Hummingbirds can be found in a wide variety of environments from rain forests to deserts to the Andes Mountains and all places in between. They need:

- A source of nutrition in the form of nectar and insects and spiders for protein
- A place to perch for rest during the day and to sleep at night
- A place to bathe regularly

Understanding these essential facts is the key to attracting them to your yard.

## Flowers as Nectar Sources

- Color can be important in the hummingbird's search process for locating flowers to feed on. Most flowers hummingbirds are attracted to have blossoms that are red to orange in color. Hummingbirds are not restricted to just these colors and will commonly visit any color in which they learn contain a sufficient amount of nectar.
- Blossom shape can be a determining factor as well. Nectar contained in long, tubular flowers is easily extracted by a hummingbird that have a long tongue and can reach places bugs cannot.
- Fragrance: Most hummingbird flowers do not carry fragrance, as hummingbirds have little or no sense of smell.
- Nectar volume seems to be the most important aspect to attracting hummingbirds. Hummingbirds are fast learners and remember which blossoms have given them the most 'booty' so to speak. Smaller blossoms hold less and require them to make more trips. The trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans*) produces one of the highest known volumes of nectar per blossom.

## Feeders

If you don't have a garden or want to supplement your garden with a hummingbird feeder, it is an easy process, just remember these tips:

- Formula: 4 parts water to 1 part white, table sugar. USE NO ARTIFICIAL COLORS! (this is somewhat of an urban myth). They will find the feeder without the food coloring and the artificial additives may harm them. Bring the water to a boil, remove from heat, then add the sugar, and stir until completely dissolved. Allow the mixture to cool, then fill your feeder(s).
- Feeder maintenance: Any mixture of sugar and water will ferment and host the growth of mold spores. In moderate temperatures (60-85 F), a mixture should last about 3 days. Regardless of the mixture's age, discard if the mixture looks cloudy or you see visible mold.

## Plants to Attract Hummingbirds

### Perennials

- ☑ **Monarda (Bee Balm)** - Full sun. Height: 1-3 ft.
- ☑ **Aquilegia (Columbine)** - Full sun. Height: 2-3 ft.
- ☑ **Delphinium** - Full sun to part shade. Height: up to 6 ft.
- ☑ **Lobelia cardinalis (Cardinal Flower)** - Full sun-part shade. Height: 4ft
- ☑ **Asclepias** - Full sun to part shade. Upright growth. Height: 1-3 ft.
- ☑ **Dianthus (Sweet William)** - Full sun. Height: 1-2 ft.

- ☑ **Salvia** - Full sun to part shade. Height: 2-4 ft.
- ☑ **Phlox** - Full sun. Height: 2-4 ft.
- ☑ **Lupine** - Full sun to part shade. Height: 6-18 in.
- ☑ **Digitalis** - Part shade. Biennial. Height: 4-5 ft.
- ☑ **Liatris (Gayfeather)** - Full sun. Upright. Height: 3-4 ft.
- ☑ **Alcea (Hollyhock)** - Full sun. Height: 3-9 ft.
- ☑ **Penstemon** - Full to part sun. Height: 2-4 ft.
- ☑ **Lilium (Lily)** - Full sun or afternoon shade. Height: 3-7 ft.
- ☑ **Agastache (Hyssop)** - Full sun to part shade. Height: 2-3 ft.
- ☑ **Lonicera (Trumpet Honeysuckle)** - Full sun to light shade. Height: 10-25 ft.

## Annuals

- ☑ **Ipomea** - Full sun to part shade. Height: 1-3 ft.
- ☑ **Begonia** - Part sun to heavy shade. Height: 6-12 in.
- ☑ **Cleome** - Full sun. Height: 1-3 ft.
- ☑ **Nicotiana** - Sun to part shade. Height: 1-2 ft.
- ☑ **Myosotis (Forget-me-not)** - Sun to part shade. Height: 6-18 in.
- ☑ **Impatiens** - Part shade to heavy shade. Height: 8-24 in.
- ☑ **Marigold** - Sun to part shade. Height: 8-48 in.
- ☑ **Nasturtium** - Sun to part shade. Height: 6"- 1 ft.
- ☑ **Petunia** - Sun to part shade. Height: 6-18 in.
- ☑ **Snapdragon** - Sun to part shade. Height: 6"- 3 ft.
- ☑ **Dianthus (Sweet William)** - Full sun. Height: 18 in.
- ☑ **Tithonia (Mexican Sunflower)** - Full sun. Height: 3-5 ft.
- ☑ **Sunflower** - Full sun. Height: 1-9 ft.
- ☑ **Verbena** - Sun to part shade. Height: 6-12 in.
- ☑ **Zinnia** - Full sun. Height: 6"- 3 ft.

\*\*Flowers should be chosen for their ability to produce nectar, to grow well in your region, and be in bloom when the hummingbirds need them. These provide a fundamental basis for creating a hummingbird-friendly yard or garden.

Now that we have the feeding down, all that's left is to make sure they have a tree or shrub to rest in and a bird bath or puddle of water to clean themselves in. Now sit back and enjoy the show, that's what all this work was for.

Happy Gardening,

Polly's Garden Center Team