



Hummingbird Gardening

Gardening for hummingbirds is a great and easy way to enjoy these tiny, brightly-colored birds. By providing a wide variety of nectar-rich flowers, water, and woody vegetation for cover and perches, you can create a crucial habitat to host hummingbirds for years to come.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird Profile

There are over a dozen species of hummingbirds that breed in the United States, but the Ruby-throated is the only one found in our area. (Several species can be vagrants in our area in the fall, but they are rare.) Ruby-throated hummingbirds are bright emerald with gray-white underparts, and the males have bright red, iridescent throat feathers (gorget). Ruby-throated hummingbirds return in the spring around late April and through mid-May, and head south in August and September. Ruby-throated hummingbirds migrate hundreds of miles between their wintering grounds in Central America to breeding grounds in the United States and Canada. In fact, many of them fly 500 miles over the Gulf of Mexico in a single flight! Therefore, it's very important to provide plenty of their favorite flowers to fuel them on their journey and a safe refuge as a stopover. (Use the plant list on the back of this sheet for recommendations.)

Designing a Hummingbird Garden

- Use plenty of red and orange, tubular flowers. Hummingbirds are attracted to bright reds and oranges, and the tubular-shaped flowers fit their bills. Cardinal flower and Trumpet creeper are good choices.
- Provide masses of nectar-rich flowers that bloom throughout the growing season, especially in August and September when they are migrating south.
- Focus on using native plants and wildflowers. They not only attract hummingbirds, but also attract the small insects that the hummingbirds feed on.
- Avoid using pesticides! A large part of a hummingbird's diet consists of small flying insects. Using pesticides would eliminate this food source and also harm the birds.
- Utilize shrubs and small trees. Hummingbirds need the branches for perches and the cover for shelter.
- Provide water in very shallow saucers or in the form of a mister.
- If using hummingbird feeders, make sure to maintain them by changing out the sugar water every other day, and to avoid drying the sugar water.

PLANTS TO ATTRACT HUMMINGBIRDS

Perennials	Common Name
Agastache	Hyssop
Aquilegia	Columbine
Buddleia	Butterfly Bush
Caryopteris	Blue Mist Shrub
Chelone	Turtlehead
Dicentra	Bleeding Heart
Digitalis	Foxglove (biennial, short-lived)
Echinacea	Coneflower (single flower)
Eupatorium	Joe Pye Weed
Hibiscus	Rose Mallow
Hosta	Hosta
Leptodermis	False Lilac
Lobelia	Cardinal Flower
Mertensia	Virginia Bluebells
Monarda	Bee Balm
Penstemon	Beardtongue
Phlox	Phlox
Physostegia	Obedient Plant
Salvia	Sage

Vines	Common Name
Campsis	Trumpet Creeper
Lonicera	Honeysuckle

Annuals	Common Name
Canna	Indian Shot
Fuschia	Fuschia
Lantana	Lantana
Nicotiana	Flowering Tobacco
Petunia	Petunia
Salvia	Sage, especially 'Black & Blue'
Zinnia	Zinna (tall varieties)

Shrubs	Common Name
Aesculus	Bottlebrush Buckeye
Cornus	Dogwood
Corylus	American Hazelnut
Diervilla	Bush Honeysuckle
Hibiscus	Rose of Sharon
Syringa	Lilac
Viburnum	Viburnum
Weigela	Weigela

Trees (Shade & Ornamental)	Common Name
Aesculus	Horsechestnut
Amelanchier	Serviceberry
Carpinus	American Hornbeam
Celtis	Hackberry
Cornus	Pagoda Dogwood
Crataegus	Hawthorn
Liriodendron	Tulip Tree
Quercus	Oak