

Hummingbirds in the Garden

Hummingbirds are a delight in the garden as they flash about in their jewel tone plumage. They are quite brazen for their size and often curious about other living things in “their” space. They have been seen “buzzing” the cat or chasing a songbird out of its territory. It is not uncommon for a hummer to stare at you through a window and silently demand that the feeder be refilled. Hummingbirds will call your garden home if you encourage them with nectar plants and a feeder.

Hummingbirds will regularly visit a feeder once they know it is there. Be patient. You may have to move it once or twice till you find the best spot for it. We have 3 predominant species here, the Rufous, Anna’s and Allen’s. The Allen’s may or may not migrate south in the winter. It is a myth that you should remove your feeder in the winter to “force” the hummingbirds to migrate to a warmer location. Migration is dependent on photoperiod, *not* food. As a matter of fact, your feeder is a salvation in late fall and winter when nectar plants have died back or stopped blooming. The packaged foods contain sugars best suited for the birds but in a pinch, you can make your own. Bring 4 parts water and 1 part sugar to a boil. Allow to cool completely. You do not need to add red coloring.

Nectar plants are the real draw for hummingbirds. You will find that butterflies are attracted to many of them as well! In general, the flowers tend to be tubular like a foxglove or they have what is called a nectary or spur at the rear. Think about the columbine or nasturtium. The favored colors are **red** and **orange**. We have put a sample list together for you.

PERENNIALS AND ANNUALS

Agastache
Aloe
Alstroemeria (Peruvian lily)
Antirrhinum majus (snapdragon)
Aquilegia sp. (columbine)
Crocasmia (iris family)
Delphinium sp.
Digitalis sp. (foxglove)
Fuchsia sp.
Gladiolus
Heuchera
Impatiens sp. (especially balfouri)
Justicia (shrimp plant)
Kniphofia uvaria (red hot poker)
Lantana
Leonotis (Lion Tail)
Lobelia sp.
Mimulus sp. (monkey flower)
Monarda (bee balm)
Nicotiana sp.
Penstemon sp. (beardtongue)
Phlox sp.
Rosmarinus (rosemary)
Salvia sp.
Zauschneria (California fuchsia)

SHRUBS AND VINES

Abelia grandiflora
Abutilon (flowering maple)
Arbutus unedo (strawberry tree)
Arctostaphylos sp. (manzanita)
Buddleja (butterfly bush)
Callistemon sp. (bottlebrush)
Campsis radicans (trumpet vine)
Ceanothus sp. (California lilac)
Cestrum sp. (jessamine)
Erica sp. (heather)
Correa sp. (Australian fuchsia)
Feijoa sellowiana (pineapple guava)
Grevillea sp.
Hibiscus sp.
Ipomoea sp. (morning glory vine)
Lavandula (lavender)
Ligustrum sp. (privet)
Lonicera sp. (honeysuckle)
Ribes sp. (currant)
Syringa (lilac)
Tecomera capensis (Cape honeysuckle)
Vaccinium ovatum (huckleberry)
Weigela florida



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Revised 08/09/2021