

Here's the recipe for artificial nectar (syrup):

- Use one part ordinary white cane sugar to four parts water.
- It's not necessary to boil the water. The microorganisms that cause fermentation don't come from the water; they are transported to the feeder on hummingbird bills.
- Store unused syrup in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.

This mixture approximates the average sucrose content (about 21%) of the flowers favored by North American hummingbirds, without being so sweet it attracts too many insects.

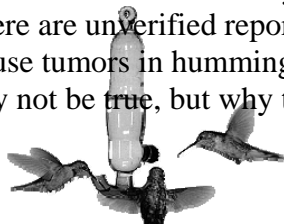
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Or Install a Hummingbird Feeder!

There are many imaginatively styled hummingbird feeders available today, and they're sold in stores ranging from birding shops and garden centers to discount marts, as well as by mail order. Most feeders are made of plastic, glass, and/or ceramics. Since feeders are much too recent a development for hummingbirds to recognize instinctively as food sources, they must learn to use them, which they do from watching other hummers and through their own natural inquisitiveness.

Any feeder can attract hummers, so perhaps the most important design feature to look for is ease of disassembly and cleaning. In this respect, the basin-style feeders are much, much better than the inverted-bottle types. Hummingbirds will come to any feeder that holds fresh syrup, so you might as well buy one that's easy for *you* to keep up - if it's easy, you're more likely to do it faithfully, and that's important.

Please, ***do not put honey, Jell-O, brown sugar, fruit, or red food coloring in your feeder!*** Honey ferments rapidly when diluted with water and can kill hummingbirds. The effects of red dye have not been scientifically tested, and it is *not* necessary to color the water to attract birds to your feeder. Further, there are unverified reports that red dye can cause tumors in hummingbirds; this may or may not be true, but why take the chance?



How to Attract Hummingbirds to Your Backyard



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FLOWERS TO ATTRACT HUMMINGBIRDS

The variety of plants for attracting hummingbirds is so great that, in the process of building hummingbird gardens, you could also be building a landscape that will be the talk of the neighborhood. In selecting flowers to attract hummingbirds, you are not limited to using red flowers, although the color, red is notorious for attracting hummingbirds. In the following list of flowers commonly used for attracting hummingbirds, you'll see lots of red flowers, but also flowers in purple, white, orange, pink and blue. They're all rich in nectar, the hummingbird food *par excellence*.

Nor is the diversity of plants for attracting hummingbirds restricted to color. Annuals and perennials, vines, shrubs, trees, bedding plants and hanging plants: you can choose from all these categories in selecting flowers for attracting hummingbirds. The following are some criteria to consider when selecting plants (in addition to the obvious -- adeptness at attracting hummingbirds):

- Diversity: to increase landscape design options
- Showiness of bloom.
- Ease of planting and maintenance.
- Color choices within the species.
- Attractiveness of foliage.
- Early or long blooming period.

LANDSCAPE PLAN FOR HUMMINGBIRDS

Different plant types will serve different functions on your hummingbird landscape:

The vine plants selected should be allowed to grow on arbors for maximum impact. Position the arbor in your landscape plan so that you'll be able to watch the hummingbirds and butterflies from a window inside your home.

The shrub plants selected can be massed in a border to form sheltered areas for your winged creatures. Breaking up a large flat expanse is an important consideration -- not only for landscape design in general, but particularly when trying to attract wildlife.

If desired: sketch a patio into your plan to house the hanging plants selected. Imagine sipping a coffee out on the patio and having a beautiful butterfly or hummingbird alight on the hanging plant right across from you or above you! If your patio will be shaded, use fuchsia hangers, not lantana. It is often convenient to combine patios and arbors, since an arbor will give you a place from which to hang your patio's hanging plants.

Perennial flowerbeds should be implemented at the very end. You would want to work on hardscape elements first, such as the arbor and patio mentioned above. Next would come the planting of the larger plants, such as the silk tree and the shrubs. It is only after all this heavy work is done that you would want to plant your perennials in beds, or hang up your lantana plants -- otherwise, you unnecessarily expose fragile plants to the risk of damage.

10 Flowers Commonly Used for Attracting Hummingbirds

1. Bee Balm
2. Red Columbine
3. Delphinium and Hollyhock
4. Butterfly Bush (unfortunately, invasive)
5. Catawba Rhododendron
6. Rose of Sharon
7. Trumpet Vine and Trumpet Honeysuckle
8. Cardinal Vine
9. Lantana and Fuchsia
10. Silk Tree (unfortunately, invasive)



Ruby-Throated hummingbird range map

Information and pictures taken from
<http://www.hummingbirds.net/feeders.html>