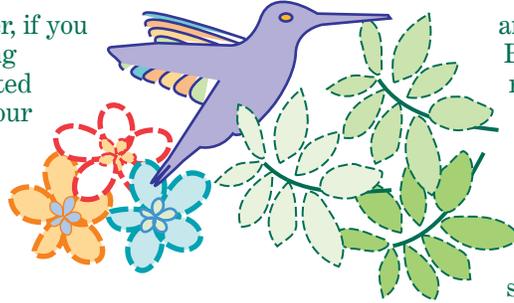




Hummingbird Haven

Backyard Habitat for Wildlife

From late March through mid November, if you look carefully, you may find a small flying jewel in your backyard. The ruby-throated hummingbird may be seen zipping by your porch or flitting about your flower garden. Inquisitive by nature, these tiny birds will fly close to investigate your colorful blouse or red baseball cap. The hummingbird, like many species of wildlife is plagued by loss of habitat. However, by providing suitable backyard habitat you can help this flying jewel of a bird.



and then spending their winters in Mexico. Beating their wings 2.7 million times, the ruby-throated hummingbird flies 500 miles nonstop across the Gulf of Mexico during migration. This trip averages 18-20 hours but with a strong tail wind, the flight takes ten hours. To survive, migrating hummers must store fat and fuel up before and right after crossing the Gulf—there are no sources of nectar over the ocean!

Hummingbird Habitat

A successful backyard haven for hummingbirds contains a variety of flowering plants including tall and medium trees, shrubs, vines, perennial and annual flowers. Flowering plants provide hummers with nectar for energy and insects for protein. Trees and shrubs provide vertical structure for nesting, perching and shelter. No matter what size garden, try to select a variety of plants to ensure flowering from spring through fall. Help keep your haven safe for hummingbirds and other wildlife by keeping cats in the house and out of your yard.

Nectar Notes

Many (but not all) hummingbird flowers are red to orange in color, are tubular shaped and are fragrance-free. Hummingbirds find nectar blossoms by sight not smell. Choose flowering plants from the list here, known as “hummingbird flowers.” For attracting hummers to your yard, plant several of the same kind of flower in groupings instead of scattering a few individuals throughout your garden bed or yard. Also, try to select longer-blooming plants for a more continuous source of nectar.

Water Works

Although hummers obtain fluids from their food, they still need water to bathe and drink. Being so small, hummers prefer to bathe in very shallow water and will even use dew drops. Providing a fine spray of water, as from a mister attached to a tree or shrub branch, will almost assure you of attracting hummingbirds to your yard. Hummingbirds and other birds love to fly into the spray for a quick sip of water or for a refreshing shower.

Hummingbird Facts

Hummingbirds are our smallest bird. The ruby-throated hummingbird measures only 3” inches and weighs less than a penny. Using their long forked tongue, hummingbirds lap up nectar or sugar water at a rate of fifteen times per second. An average hummingbird consumes half its weight in sugar daily.

Hummingbirds are named for the “humming” sound made by their wings. Hummers can fly forward, backward, even up-side down and hover midair in one place. They average 35 m.p.h. during flight, but are capable of flying upwards of 75 m.p.h.

Ruby-throats are the only hummingbird known to nest in the southeast. Females always lay two eggs, each smaller than a jellybean. Ruby-throats are neotropical migratory birds, breeding in the eastern half of the United States and Canada

Hummingbird Flowers

<i>Flowers</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Color</i>	<i>Bloom time</i>
Herbaceous Plants			
Bee Balm	2-4'	W, P, R, L	summer
Blazing Star	2-6'	L	summer & fall
Cardinal Flower	2-5'	R	summer
Columbine	1-4'	all	spring & summer
Coral Bells	6-12"	W, P, R	spring
Fire Pink	1-2'	R	spring & summer
Flowering Tobacco	1-3'	-B	summer
Four o'clock	1-3'	-B	summer
Foxglove	2-6'	W, P, Y, L	spring
Fuchsia	1-3'	W, P, L, R	spring—fall
Hollyhock	4-8'	-B	spring
Jewelweed	3'	O	summer & fall
Penstemon	1-2'	P, R	summer
Petunia	1-2'	all	summer & fall
Phlox	1-3'	all	varies with species
Salvia (Sage)	1-5'	R, B, W, L	varies with species
Sweet William	1-2'	W, P, R, L	spring
Verbena	3-6"	all	spring—fall
Zinnia	6-36"	-B	summer
Trees and Shrubs			
Abelia	2-6'	W, P	summer
Azalea	1-10'	all	spring
Hibiscus	5-10'	all	summer & fall
Red Buckeye	10-20'	R	spring
Tulip Poplar	100'	W, O	spring
Weigela	6-10'	P, R	spring
Vines			
Coral (Trumpet) Honeysuckle		R, Y	spring
Cypress-Vine		R, W	summer & fall
Red Morning Glory		R	summer & fall
Scarlet Runner-Bean		R, W	summer
Trumpet Vine (Creeper)		R, O, Y	summer

Colors: B=blue, L=lavender, O=orange, P=pink, R=Red, W=white, Y=yellow, -=absence of a single color