



BACKYARD nature center News

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Gardens for Hummingbirds

Bright-colored, quick-moving, and aerodynamically improbable, hummingbirds seem to make play of all of life's chores. Whether feeding, courting, bathing, or taking care of the kids, hummers dart, dive, and hover with apparent joy. It's no wonder that so many of us want these winged jewels in our yards.

You can make your property into a hummingbird playground by offering a range of dining options, moving water, and a place for their nurseries.

Dining Options

Plan your garden carefully to provide an immovable feast for one of nature's most movable creatures. Your garden should flower from late spring to early-to-mid fall, thus offering a continual source of nectar and insects for the hummers. Considering the number of visits they make to our feeders, it's often surprising to learn that hummers get only a small percentage of their calories from feeder offerings. Hummingbirds spend much of the day sipping nectar from flowers and munching spiders and gnats and other insects.

Hummingbirds don't play well with others. Females tolerate their mates only long enough to ensure reproductive success. Your garden will attract more hummingbirds if it is designed with physically separate areas for feeders and for alfresco dining.

For a garden pleasing to both the human and the hummingbird eye, plant flowers of various sizes and bloom times. Generally, you will want to plant low-growing flowers in the front (facing your viewing area) and taller ones in the back.

Moving Water

Water is an often-ignored (but important) element of a hummingbird garden. A birdbath is OK, but one with a mister will be a real hit!

These birds will not hesitate to fly through a man-made sprinkler or mister for a quick rinse.



The Nursery

Hummingbirds usually build their tiny, cup-shaped nests 10 to 20 feet off the ground. Each lichen-covered nest is held together with spider silk and attached to a downward-sloping tree limb, sometimes over a body of water, such as a stream or creek.

Other Tips

Hummingbirds are aggressive. They will perch on any branch with a good view and quick access to the feeding grounds. They don't hesitate to launch an aggravated assault at any other bird that presumes to feed in their territory. Happily, hummers seem to consider us too slow and too stupid to be a threat to them!

There are no guarantees, of course, but a hummingbird-attractive garden and a feeder full of nectar will probably go a long way toward convincing the hummers that your yard is THE place to set up housekeeping.

If you'd like some help choosing garden flowers that attract hummingbirds, talk to us the next time you're in the store.

Bees a bother at your hummingbird feeder?

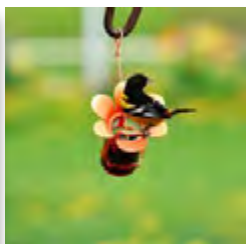
Full of natural ingredients bees just cannot stand but hummingbirds like! Repels wasps, hornets, stinging insects and ants. Completely organic. No need to over spray. A little dab will do.



SKYBOX CAFÉ



Tired of that old beat-up nasty feeder?
Time to freshen up and invite bright
colorful spring songbirds to your yard!



Why on earth would I buy Bird Berry Jelly at the bird store?

Here's why. Most jelly purchased at the grocery stores contains fructose corn syrup. Corn syrup is very bad for us as well as the birds. It is very hard on their reproductive system. We all know what sugar junkies Orioles are so...either make your own jelly or simply purchase ours which is made with the Orioles health in mind.

Note: use it on your toast too!



A not so famous quote

"I don't feed the birds because they need me; I feed the birds because I need them. I think the most important quality in a birdwatcher is a willingness to stand quietly and see what comes."

- Cathy

Spring Feeder Issues

Spring brings new birds and with them you can have new problems. In March, Grackles return in flocks and take over feeding stations, running everyone else away. They can become a real pain, but there are ways to minimize their impact. Just spreading your feeders out and not having all of them in the same area will lessen the impact of these big birds dominating all the area. They will tend to concentrate on the feeders with the most room that are easiest for them to use. Feeders with small perches will limit Grackle usage by not providing enough room to perch. Thistle feeders with small openings for the Goldfinch are almost impossible for the larger birds to use. They can't get their beaks in the tiny openings.

Another very effective solution is to use a feeder with a cage around it that keeps the larger birds out and allows finch sized birds access to the seed inside. But it will also keep out Cardinals, so many people switch to safflower seed at this time. The best thing about safflower is that Grackles and squirrels don't seem to like it, but Cardinals and House Finch will eat it. Grackles will pick thru it at first looking for other things and then tend to ignore it, leaving it for your other birds.



Another problem that occurs this time of year is the accumulation of shells and debris under the feeders. It can be unsightly and uneaten seed can sprout and grow. There is any easy solution: Patio Mix! Our Patio Mix is a combination of sunflower chips, millet and peanuts, all with the shells removed. This is an extremely bird attractive mixture that leaves no shell mess and the seed is less likely to sprout with the shells removed. The other advantage is that birds that normally don't eat seed because of the shell, like Eastern Bluebirds, or Carolina Wrens, that are insect eaters, can eat the seed when the shell is removed. The cost is a little bit more, but shells make up about 40% of the bag weight in most mixes. You get all food and no mess and the cost actually figures out to be less per pound when you buy Patio Mix!



The heat of spring also brings with it the return of insects. Ants and bees can become a problem on nectar feeders if you don't prepare for them. Ants are very easy to control with the addition of an ant moat. This is just a small cup like addition that you hang your hummingbird feeder from. You fill it with water and the ants will not cross the water to get to your feeder, therefore eliminating them. Bees are a little more difficult to control but adding a little salad oil to the area around the opening of the feeder will make it more difficult for them to hang on to. Using saucer shaped feeders make it very difficult to reach the nectar below but the hummingbirds have no problem.



For people who feed and care for backyard birds
The Shops at Tallgrass
8336 E. 21st Street, #500 • Wichita, KS 67206
www.backyardnaturecenter.com
316-683-2121

STORE HOURS

Monday–Saturday: 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
Sunday: Closed

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT:
WWW.BACKYARDNATURECENTER.COM



Good Help Wanted

Do you like to **talk about the birds** you attract in your yard?

Do you have a **need to help others**?

Would you enjoy a **part time job** where the only people who come in to our store are hungry for good information, eager to learn and appreciate your help and direction?

A feel-good job indeed! We all carry out 20 lb. bags of seed daily, and use a cart for anything larger. It's a "happy place" to work. Stop by and see if you think it's a good fit for you!

WILD CARD COUPON

20% OFF ONE ITEM

Excludes binoculars and seed.
Coupon expires May 31, 2023

