

Flying jewels

Do you want to see something amazing? Plant a hummingbird garden. Soon you will be dazzled with sparkling gems all around you.

Hummingbirds are one of the most unbelievable birds on earth. These “flying jewels” can flutter their wings up to 200 times per *second*—you can actually hear the air move when they hover among the flowers.

Hummingbirds have completed their migration to the Dakotas. Along its migration route the birds crossed the Gulf of Mexico, a non-stop flight of 500 miles over water. Amazing!

Ounce for ounce, hummingbirds require more calories than any other bird. They eat every 10 minutes during the day and can die if they don't eat within an hour. Ouch! So the best way to attract these hungry birds is to fill your garden full of nectar-filled flowers.

Hummingbirds are well adapted to harvest nectar from flowers. They lap up nectar with



their brush-coated tongue inside its tubular bill.

Hummingbirds are especially attracted to red tubular-shaped flowers. Salvia, petunia, canna, bee balm, fuchsia, foxglove, coral bells, snapdragon, zinnia, red hot poker, and columbine are excellent flower choices. Flowers with pink or orange are also appealing. Plant flowers in clusters to maximize visibility.


Many vines are attractive to hummingbirds. Consider trumpet vine, honeysuckle, morning glory, scarlet runner bean, and climbing nasturtium.

Another option is to attract the birds with feeders. Make sure you buy a feeder that is easy to clean and fill. Hang your feeder in a shady spot protected from wind.

Syrup for hummingbird feeders may be purchased or you can make your own by mixing four parts water with one part white granulated sugar. Don't use honey, which may create mold problems. Boil the water and stir in the sugar until it dissolves. Let the solution cool before pouring

it into the feeder. Do not add red food coloring in the solution—this may harm the bird. Store any unused solution in the refrigerator.

You'll need to clean your feeder about every three days, depending on the outdoors temperature. Dispose of the old solution and clean the feeder with warm water and a brush. Vinegar may be used to clean hard-to-reach places. A mild detergent is sometimes used for cleaning and a few drops of bleach can disinfect the feeder. Whatever you use to clean the feeder, make sure you thoroughly rinse it with water.

Hummingbirds have very good memories and can remember where they found food from the previous year. So what are you waiting for? Let's plant some flowers, put up a feeder, and let the dazzling show begin! 

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