



## Attracting Hummingbirds by Don & Lillian Stokes

It's easy to attract hummingbirds almost anywhere in the United States and southern Canada if you create favorable habitats and put up hummingbird feeders. Be sure to put up your feeders before hummingbirds are expected in your area. That may mean February to mid-March in southern areas, late March to early April in the middle of the US, and mid-April to mid-May in the north. In the west, Allen's Hummingbirds may arrive at its breeding grounds as early as January. A few species, such as Anna's (west) and Buff-Bellied (south Texas), can be found all year.

Choose a hummingbird feeder that is easy to clean and has some red on it. The best place to put your feeder initially is near red tubular flowers that are attractive to hummingbirds, such as impatiens, salvia, bee balm and penstemon. Although hummingbirds feed at flowers of different colors, they are most attracted to red flowers. Try to place the feeders where they will be protected from the wind and where there is some shade. Feeders may be suspended from a wire or from a hummingbird hook such as the More Birds® 42" Hummingbird Hook.

Fill the feeder with a sugar water/nectar solution. To make a nectar solution, mix 1 part white table sugar (never honey or artificial sweeteners) and 4 parts water. This is appealing to hummingbirds because it approximates the ration of sugar to water found in the nectar of many hummingbird flowers. Boil the mixture for 1-2 minutes to dissolve the sugar. Cool, then fill feeder. Store unused nectar in the refrigerator. Besides nectar, hummingbirds also will eat a variety of insects and spiders.

Maintain your hummingbird feeder by cleaning and refilling it every two days in hot weather because the nectar solution could mold or spoil in high temperatures. Scrub the feeder with hot water and a little vinegar. For really tough cleaning jobs, use a mild bleach solution. After cleaning, thoroughly rinse feeder.

Create a good hummingbird habitat by planting a variety of flowering trees, shrubs, vines and herbaceous flowers that are attractive to hummingbirds. Group trees or shrubs together to form pleasant clusters and masses of vegetation, then place beds or containers of flowers around or in front of them. For a list of hummingbird flowers, consult sources such as the [Stokes Hummingbird Book](#).





In most areas of the country, hummingbird feeders should be left up until there is a hard frost. Leaving up the feeders until then will not cause the hummingbirds to delay migration; they know instinctively when to migrate. Leaving up the feeders may actually help migrating hummers, who will pause to refuel at your feeder.

Hummingbirds are found year-round in some areas of the country, such as the Pacific coast, the lower southeast and parts of the southwest. In these areas, hummingbirds can be fed throughout the year.

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