

Backyard Wildlife Habitat

Attracting Hummingbirds

Tiny, iridescent hummingbirds can be an exciting addition to your backyard wildlife. If hummingbirds live in your area, you can attract them by planting red, tubular flowers. There are many red-flowered plants to choose from. Over 160 native North American plants depend exclusively on hummingbirds for pollination. Many of the red-flowered annuals, perennials, vines, and shrubs available from mail order sources or local garden centers have been developed from the native red-flowered plants of the western hemisphere.



Hummingbird Facts:

- The smallest bird in the world, the Cuban bee hummingbird is 2 1/4" long – about the size of a bumble bee.
- Hummingbirds, like helicopters, can hover. They can also move ahead, sideways or backward at will.
- A Ruby-throated Hummingbird, (most commonly seen hummingbird in MO) weighing about one tenth of an ounce, can travel 600 miles in migration.
- Hummingbirds not only sip nectar, but also eat tiny insects and spiders. They may drink up to eight times their body weight daily in water.
- Although their normal body temperature is about 103° F (40° C) it may drop to 70° at night. They have the ability to endure temporary cool weather or cool nights by becoming dormant.
- There are 340 species of hummingbirds in the world and all are found only in the western hemisphere. Of these, only one, the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, is found regularly east of the Mississippi.
- Flying consumes a great deal of a hummingbird's energy. Wing beats have been measured at 20-200 beats per second.

List of plants for attracting hummingbirds

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| • Trumpet honeysuckle | • Cypress vine | • Scarlet petunia |
| • Trumpet-creeper | • Scarlet paintbrush | • Red buckeye |
| • Cardinal-flower | • Scarlet salvia | • Geiger Tree |
| • Scarlet penstemon | • Bee-balm | • Scarlet bush |
| • Scarlet morning-glory | • Fire pink | • Coral bells |

As a supplementary source of food, hummingbird feeders can be hung in your Backyard Wildlife Habitat. Many types of feeders are available and all should be filled with a boiled solution of four parts water to one part white refined sugar, or a commercial "nectar" mix. Do not use honey solutions in feeders as they may produce a fungal disease fatal to hummingbirds. Sugar water feeders should be cleaned every three to five days using a brush and a mild detergent solution. Rinse well.

Lakeside Nature Center

4701 E. Gregory Blvd • Kansas City, MO 64134 • (816) 513-8960

www.lakesidenaturecenter.org

