



Attracting Hummingbirds

Amazing Facts about Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds:

- Of the 340 species of hummingbirds in the world only 10 species occur in the United States and only the Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds travel and breed east of the Mississippi River.
- Their primary food source is nectar, but they also consume tree sap, flower pollen, and a variety of insects including spiders, beetles, flies, gnats, mosquitoes, weevils, and aphids.
- A hummingbird can fly forward, backward, upside-down, and at speeds up to 35-60 miles per hour!
- A hummingbird's wings beat 70 to 80 times/second during regular flight and up to 200 times/second during a display dive. They have 1 wing joint, (most birds have 3 wing joints), similar to insects.
- A hummingbird's flight (or pectoral) muscles account for one quarter of its total weight (compared to 5% in humans). Their wing structure accounts for 50% of their total weight.
- In flight, hummingbirds burn 8 times the energy they use while at rest, feeding constantly during the day.
- A hummingbird's heart beats 1,260 times per minute during exercise, at rest 50-250 beats per minute.
- At rest, a hummingbird's metabolism is 25 times faster than a chicken's, and 100 times faster than an elephant's, burning ½ its weight in sugar each day (1.5 grams).
- Hummingbirds consume calories at a rate 50 times greater than humans. We would have to eat 285 lbs. of hamburger, or twice our body weight in potatoes a day to match that.
- A hummingbird's head makes up 4% of its bodyweight. If a human's head was 4% of his body weight, our heads would be twice as large as they are now.
- A hummingbird's body temperature drops from a normal daytime temperature of 104°F, to 50°F at night. To conserve energy, hummingbirds go into a state of hibernation called torpor. Their breathing and heartbeat slows to about 50 beats per minute. Torpor can last 8-14 hours. As they wake up, their breathing and heart rate increases. When their body temperature reaches 86°F, they are able to fly again.
- Males have a red patch on their throat called a gorget (gor-jet), which is a protective coloring to blend in with the flowers as predators watch from below.
- Females build the nest (the size of a half-dollar) out of moss, lichen and spider webs, incubate the eggs (clutch size is usually two), feed and rear their young (20-40 days), and are unaided by the males.
- Hummingbirds sit on their eggs for 8-15 days, the shortest incubation time for any bird!
- Adult Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds weigh 3 grams, measure 3-3.75" long, and live 5-9 years.
- Each fall they migrate south, approximately 500 miles, nonstop, across the Gulf of Mexico.

rev. 8/11

Plants to Attract Hummingbirds

(their favorites are red to deep pink, trumpet, tubular, or pea shaped flowers):

Annuals

Abutilon spp. (Flowering Maple)
Antirrhinum spp. (Snapdragon)
Calibrachoa spp. (Million Bells)
Canna spp.
Cleome spp.
Dianthus spp. (Annual Pinks)
Fuchsia spp.
Hibiscus spp. (tropical)
Impatiens spp.
Ipomoea spp. (Morning Glory)
Lantana spp.
Nicotiana spp. (Tobacco Flower)
Pelargonium (Annual Geranium)
Penta spp.
Petunia spp.
Salvia spp. (Red-flowering or Pineapple Sage)
Tropaeolum spp. (Nasturtium)
Verbena spp.
Zinnia spp.

Trees, Shrubs & Vines

Aesculus spp. (Buckeye/Horsechestnut)
Buddleia spp. (Butterfly Bush)
Campsis spp. (Trumpet Vine)
Cercis spp. (Redbud)
Chaenomeles spp. (Flowering Quince)
Hibiscus spp. (Rose of Sharon)
Lonicera spp. (Honeysuckle)
Rhododendron spp. (Azalea)
Syringa spp. (Lilac)
Weigela spp.
Yucca spp.

Perennials

Agastache spp. (False Hyssop)
Ajuga spp. (Bugleweed)
Alcea spp. (Hollyhock)
Aquilegia spp. (Columbine)
Asclepias spp. (Butterfly Weed)
Campanula spp. (Bellflower)
Crocasmia spp.
Delphinium spp.
Dianthus spp. (Hardy Pinks)
Dicentra spp. (Bleeding Heart)
Digitalis spp. (Foxglove)
Hemerocallis spp. (Daylily)
Heuchera spp. (Coral Bells)
Hibiscus spp. (hardy)
Hosta spp.
Iris spp.
Knifophia spp. (Red-hot Poker)
Liatris spp. (Gayfeather)
Lilium spp. (Lilies)
Lobelia cardinalis (Red Lobelia)
Lupinus spp. (Lupine)
Monarda spp. (Bee Balm)
Nepeta spp. (Catmint)
Penstemon spp. (Beardtongue)
Phlox spp. (Creeping or Garden)
Physostegia spp. (Obedient Plant)
Salvia spp. (Meadow Sage)
Scabiosa spp. (Pincushion Flower)
Silene spp. (Champion/Catchfly)



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