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Attract Hummingbirds to Your Garden

by Lydia Holley

Are you interested in attracting hummingbirds to your garden? If you plant a hummingbird garden, they will come.



Hummingbirds are interesting little creatures. The ruby-throated hummingbird is the hummingbird common to East Texas, and the only hummingbird regularly seen in the Eastern part of the United States. It is thought that most ruby-throated hummingbirds spend their winters in Mexico or Panama, migrating northward around March to May, and back again in August to October. Males begin the migration first, followed by females and then the younger hummingbirds. They migrate alone, not in flocks. Although they usually weigh less than a nickel, hummingbirds add weight before migrating. If a hummingbird migrates from Canada to Central America, it may have to travel up to 2,500 miles. It is estimated that it takes 20 hours to fly across the Gulf of Mexico.

Ruby-throated hummingbirds breed during the summer months, and have one to possibly three broods per year. They usually have two eggs per nest. They are solitary birds, only spending time together during the mating period. The female raises the young. These birds are famous for not sharing food in feeding stations. The mother allows her young to feed at the same station for a few weeks, but will soon fight them off, also.

While it is known that hummingbirds are attracted to red and tubular shaped flowers, they will also feed from the nectar of other flowers, as well as eat tiny insects and spiders. If you are interested in attracting hummingbirds to your garden, try adding the following trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals to your garden.

Trees: crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia*), chaste tree (*Vitex*);

Shrubs: butterfly bush (*Buddleia*), rose of sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*), summersweet (*Clethra*), hummingbird bush (*Anisacanthus*);

Perennials: turk's cap (*Malvaviscus drummondii*), firebush (*Hamelia patens*), bee balm (*Monarda*), beardtongue (*Penstemon*), shrimp plant (*Justicia*), blazing star (*Liatris*), lantana, salvias;

Annuals: penta, zinnia, cosmos, petunia, sunflower, cleome, nicotiana, and mandevilla vine.

Perennial vines: coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), trumpet creeper (*Campis radicans*) and passionvine (*Passiflora*).

When hummingbirds see that you have planted their favorite flowers, they should be happy to visit your garden. Since it is estimated that hummingbirds live an average of around three years, expect to have hummingbirds returning to your garden year after year.

For more information, call 903-675-6130, email hendersonCMGA@gmail.com or visit www.henderson-co-tx-mg.org.