



Trumpet
Honeysuckle
(*Lonicera
sempervirens*)

- **Choose flowers with red, pink, or orange with a tubular shape.**

Tubular flowers contain nectar at the bottom, which encourages these long-beaked birds to probe for their sweet meal. In general, flowers that rely on fragrance to attract insect pollinators are not good nectar sources, as most birds have a poor sense of smell.

- **Soft linings are important.** Hummingbirds usually line their nest with soft plant fibers, so plant cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*), which has fuzzy stems, and pussy willow (*Salix discolor*), which has fuzzy flowers. If your yard contains thistle (*Cirsium spp.*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), allow some to remain—their fluffy seeds provide nesting material.

- **Select plants that bloom at different times.** This provides nectar throughout the growing season. This is especially important in early spring when migrants first return, exhausted from their long travels.

- **Plant patches of three or more individual plants of the same species.** This will provide larger quantities of nectar. Also, prune the tips of flowering plants to encourage more flowers.

- **Avoid pesticides.** Birds can ingest poisons when they eat contaminated insects, and systemic herbicides can make their way into flower nectar. Let birds be your natural insect control.

- **Be persistent.** Nectar-feeding birds may appear moments after you set out flowers and feeders... or it may take weeks before they chance upon your garden. Once hummingbirds start visiting your garden, some will likely stay throughout the season and return the following year.



- **Use hummingbird and oriole nectar feeders.** This will help attract the birds until your garden flowers are flourishing and to lure birds up close for better viewing. To prepare a sugar water, mix one part white sugar to four parts water. Bring to a boil to sterilize and then strain all of the sugar. Store unused quantity in refrigerator.

Clean feeders every two or three days under hot running water, scrubbing thoroughly with a bottlebrush to eliminate deadly fungi. Likewise, do not use honey in feeders as this can grow deadly mold. Also avoid red food coloring—it is unnecessary.



Hummingbird
nectar feeders



To help attract hummingbirds to new feeders, tie a cluster of plastic red flowers over the feeder entrance.

Lure orioles and tanagers up close by offering halved oranges on spikes or grape jelly in special feeders or small bowls. ■



Oriole jelly & orange feeder

For More Information

- Visit the AUDUBON AT HOME web site: www.audubonathome.org
- Contribute to conservation efforts by participating in citizen science projects like the annual Great Backyard Bird Count each February (www.birdsource.org/gbbc), or Project FeederWatch (<http://birds.cornell.edu/pfw>).
- Visit the AUDUBON MARKETPLACE to view Audubon licensed products and publications: www.audubon.org/market/licensed

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

THE AUDUBON SOCIETY GUIDE TO ATTRACTING BIRDS
Stephen W. Kress. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 2006

NORTH AMERICAN BIRDFEEDER GUIDE
Robert Burton and Stephen W. Kress. Dorling Kindersley, New York, NY, 2005

HUMMINGBIRD GARDENS
Stephen W. Kress. Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Brooklyn, NY, 2007

THE AUDUBON MISSION

To conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

BECOME A MEMBER

For more information about Audubon, including how to become a member, visit www.audubon.org or call 800-274-4201.



Audubon™

225 Varick Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10014

Audubon is a trademark of
National Audubon Society, Inc.

NASNECTARBIRDS 0708



Audubon™

ATTRACTING HUMMINGBIRDS AND ORIOLES

BY STEPHEN W. KRESS, PH.D.

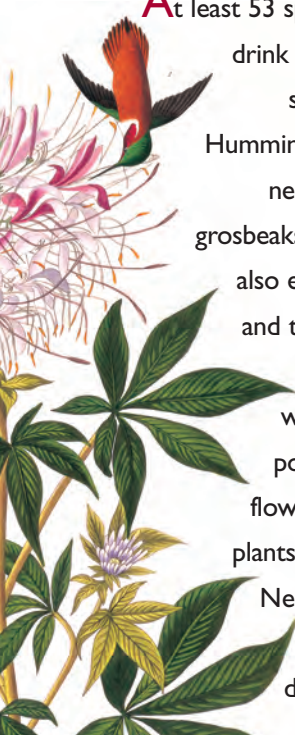
VP FOR BIRD CONSERVATION
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY





Attracting Hummingbirds and Orioles

At least 53 species of North American birds drink nectar—the naturally occurring sweet liquid produced by plants. Hummingbirds and orioles are the main nectar drinkers, but mockingbirds, grosbeaks, tanagers, and several warblers also enjoy sweet drinks from flowers and tree sap. Nectar tempts birds to poke their beaks into flowers where they inadvertently pick up pollen and carry it to neighboring flowers. This cross-pollination keeps plants vital by preventing inbreeding. Nectar drinkers also benefit from eating protein-rich insects and drinking the high calorie nectar.



Hummingbirds are the tiniest of vertebrates, but they are giants when it comes to avian accomplishment. Hummingbirds have the largest brain and greatest appetite of all birds their size. They also have the fastest wing beat, quickest heartbeat, and highest body temperatures. Some hummingbirds and other nectar eaters migrate thousands of miles each year. To accomplish these remarkable feats, they rely on the abundant supply of nectar usually found within specially designed flowers that have co-evolved with hummingbirds for thousands of years.

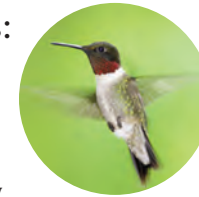
Like other migrants, nectar-drinking birds are vulnerable to extreme weather, disease, and predators. They also suffer from habitat loss, pesticides, and collisions with windows and cell towers. Backyard gardens, large and small, can provide sanctuary for resident and migrating nectar-eating birds. Sugar water feeders provide nourishment, but they are most helpful as a supplement to the natural nectar obtained from flowers. It's best to create gardens that provide real flower nectar as part of a complete habitat that offers shelter, nesting places, and water.

Since hummingbirds and orioles naturally frequent openings in the forest and forest edges, they are readily drawn to suburban and rural gardens that offer a mix of tall trees, shrubs, meadow, and lawn. During migration, they frequent parks and urban yards planted with bright flowers.

Tips for attracting hummingbirds, orioles, and other nectar-eating birds:

Draw a sketch of your yard.

Indicate the location of your home and outbuildings. Include trees, shrubs, flower beds, and other features that may offer benefit to hummingbirds and orioles. Use your landscape sketch to determine the best location for your nectar gardens. A site close to a window or patio door will provide you with the best views. Hummingbird gardens need not be large—even a window box or hanging planter will do.



Think vertically when planning gardens for nectar feeders.

Grow a cascade of nectar-rich plants by securing a trellis to your house, then plant trumpet honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) beneath it. Trees and garden sheds can also support sturdy trellises for trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans*). Layer herbaceous or lower growing plants (see plant selections below) in front of vines. Then, add window boxes, tubs, or ceramic pots to create a terraced effect and provide growing places for a variety of nectar plants like hamelia patens, cigar plant (*Cuphea spp.*), and justicias.

Provide a water feature. Like most birds, hummingbirds frequently bathe in shallow water, and may preen or flit through the droplets generated by garden misters, drip systems, and small pump-fed

waterfalls. Orioles also prefer shallow water—no more than two inches deep.

• **Provide trees and shrubs.** Hummingbirds and orioles use trees for perching and nesting. Large tree trunks may also provide a source of lichens, which many hummingbirds attach to the outsides of their nests with spider silk for camouflage. Hummingbirds usually nest in the forks of small, stiff tree branches; orioles favor the drooping branches of maples, poplars, willow, and conifers. If your garden does not include trees or shrubs, a dead branch with small perching twigs makes a good substitute. Locate these perches near your garden or sugar water feeders.

• **Find out the migration dates for your local hummingbirds.** This will help you select plants that bloom when hummingbirds are most likely to visit and determine when to put out hummingbird feeders. Don't worry that leaving feeders up too long will prevent hummingbirds from migrating on time; migration is triggered mainly by day length rather than food availability. In regions where winter freezes are rare, some hummingbirds and orioles may stay through winter.



• **Favor native plants.** Learn which native plants hummingbirds feed on in nearby natural areas, and include these in your garden. Native plants and nectar-eating birds have a long association; these plants will serve as reliable sources of nectar.

continued >>>>

NECTAR PLANTS FOR NORTH AMERICAN GARDENS

Bearded Tongue (*Penstemon spp.*); perennial

Bee Balm (*Monarda fistulosa*, *Monarda didyma*); perennial with purple, pink, or red flowers

Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*); perennial; requires moist soil, partial shade

Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*); perennial with orange-yellow flowers

Coral Bells (*Heuchera sanguinea*); compact perennial with small red flowers

Jewelweeds (*Impatiens spp.*); annual

Madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*); northwestern tree

Manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos spp.*); low shrubs and groundcovers

Paintbrushes (*Castilleja spp.*); annuals and perennials

Hyssops (*Agastache spp.*); perennial herbaceous

Salvias (*Salvia spp.*); perennials and annuals

Solomon's-seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*); perennial

Trumpet Honeysuckle

(*Lonicera sempervirens*); well-behaved vine with orange flowers

Trumpet Vine (*Campsis radicans*); orange or yellow flowers on large vine requiring substantial support

Twinberry (*Lonicera involucrata*); low-growing, shrubby vine

NECTAR PLANTS FOR SOUTHERN GARDENS

(Check with local nurseries to determine tolerance for temperature extremes.)

Coral Bean (*Erythrina herbacea*); southern shrub or small tree

Fairy Duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*); southwestern shrub, blooms year-round

Fire Pink (*Silene virginica*); bright red flowered perennial

Indian Pink (*Spigelia marilandica*); bright red-flowered perennial

Red Buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*); small southeastern native tree with bright red flowers

Standing Cypress (*Ipomopsis rubra*); southern biennial or perennial



Fairy Duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*)

Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*)