

URBAN FARMER

LOVE THE EARTH

How to help migrating hummingbirds:

Many gardeners place hummingbird-specific feeders in their yards and gardens in hopes of attracting the beautiful, speedy and small bird to their garden, but there are other, more natural ways to help the migrating birds when they make their way through your state.

The basics of hummingbird migration:

The best way to attract hummingbirds to your garden is to educate yourself on their migration patterns. Hummingbirds migrate north to their breeding grounds and south for their wintering grounds. They migrate alone during the day and stay close to the ground because they need to feed often in order to produce continuous energy.

Hummingbird feeders or flowers best for attracting the birds are best when they are available from early spring through late fall. For most species, the male hummingbirds tend to migrate a bit sooner than the females. And although organic and natural food sources are always great, sometimes in the early spring hummingbird feeders provide a food source for the hummingbirds when their favorite flowers may not be in bloom yet.

Providing the right food source:

Hummingbird's top food source priority is nectar-providing flowers, and then they also eat insects. Instead of putting a hummingbird feeder in your garden, a more natural way would be to plant flowers such as columbine, bleeding hearts, scarlet creeper,



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desert trumpet and others. These flowers appeal to hummingbirds because they are best situated for the bird's long bill, they are bright colors which attract the hummingbirds and they produce lots of nectar.

Other ways to help migrating hummingbirds:

In addition to providing a food source for the hummingbirds, there are other ways gardeners can help the hummingbirds during their migrating season. Gardeners can provide nesting materials in the spring, and when it comes to the late fall, the gardeners can take steps to prevent hummingbird feeders from freezing so any lingering hummingbirds have a food source to help power them to their southern wintering grounds.

Another way to help the birds is by keeping the feeders clean and replacing any spoiled nectar with fresh sugar water regularly so the food is safe and healthy for the hummingbirds to consume.



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Making a garden or yard nest-friendly for a hummingbird:

Since hummingbirds aren't cavity nesters, they will build nests out of lichen, feathers, moss, spider silk and other materials. Make your yard nest-friendly for hummingbirds by making sure there's a food source and also making sure there is shelter such as trees with perching spots and plenty of shrubs. Water, such as misters or bubblers, also makes the yard more attractive to hummingbirds. Another way to attract hummingbirds to your garden is implementing the color red. If you want to encourage nesting, try not to post up too many hummingbird feeders because it will bring too much competition for birds to nest comfortably.



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