

# Wild Bird Center of Boulder

## Hummingbird Basics



### Hummingbird Feeding 101

Avoid commercial mixes and make your own nectar\* with the formula below.

**4 parts water—1 part sugar**

No honey, brown sugar, fructose, artificial sweeteners, or red dye. All of the above can pose serious health risks to the hummingbirds.

Every 3-4 days empty the old nectar from your feeder, rinse thoroughly, and fill with new nectar.

Nectar can be stored up to 2 weeks in the refrigerator.

No need to boil the water or nectar.

If your nectar turns cloudy, then it is starting to ferment and mold. The hummingbirds will avoid spoiled nectar and will not be motivated to return.

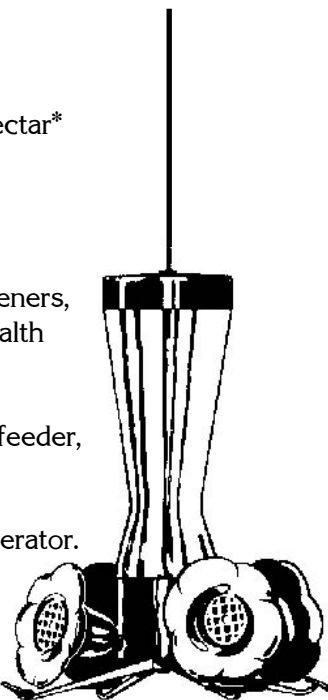
If your feeder gets really moldy and dirty you need to clean it well. You can use almost anything to clean the feeder, as long as you rinse the feeder well before using it. We would suggest a special hummingbird feeder brush and soapy water. Hydrogen peroxide or vinegar in the feeder overnight will also work very well. Having a hard time reaching inside the base to clean it? Put some uncooked rice and soapy water inside and give the feeder a shake to scour out the mold.

\* Wild Bird Center Nectar does not contain any colors or preservatives. It only contains milled sugar which dissolves easily even in cold water.

### Gardening for hummingbirds

On the plains, it is essential to garden for hummingbirds if you expect any success in attracting them to your yard. Your best opportunity is during southward migration in July and August. Make sure your flowers bloom during this period. Here are some of the best plants for attracting hummers in Colorado in no particular order.

**Hyssops** *Agastache sp.*, **salvias**, **trumpet honeysuckle** *Lonicera sp.*, **penstemons**, **orange carpet** *Zauschneria garretti*, **rebirds in a tree** *Scrophularia macrantha*, **scarlet hedgenettle** *Stachys coccinea*, **scarlet runner bean** *Phaseolus coccineus*, **cardinal climber** *Ipomoea quamoclit*, **butterfly bush** *Buddleja sp.*, **fireweed** *Chamerion angustifolium*, **coral bells** *Heuchera sp.*, **yucca** *Hesperaloe sp.*, **four o'clocks** *Mirabilis sp.*, **scarlet gilia** *Imopsis aggregate*, and **bee balm** *Monarda sp.*



### Other Hummingbird Facts

Feeders can be placed at any height. We would suggest placing your feeder so it is in afternoon shade to reduce spoilage.

Hummers arrive around mid-April and leave by early September. There are **no** rules about when to start or stop feeding.

Hummingbirds are summer residents of the mountains and foothills. They are only on the plains during migration.

Rufous hummingbirds show up around July 4th and can dominate feeders. To combat this, put a small feeder up away from other feeders and higher than the other feeders. Fill it with a stronger sugar solution (3:1) and the rufous will tend to prefer this feeder and leave the hummingbirds at the other feeders alone.

Our only nesting hummingbird is the broad-tailed hummingbird. Two others, the rufous and the calliope, visit us during southward migration.

Hummingbirds can also be attracted by splashing or misting water.

“Your backyard  
birding specialists”

[www.wildbird.com/blid](http://www.wildbird.com/blid)

**Wild Bird Center**

On 28th south of Canyon  
Boulder 303-442-1322

M-F 10-6, Sat 9-5, Sun 11-5  
Serving Boulder County  
since 1989