

Attracting Hummingbirds in Your Landscape

It is particularly interesting to attract hummingbirds to your landscape. These brightly colored, energetic birds can provide hours of visual entertainment. The hummingbird is the smallest native bird in North America, with a length of about 3 ½ inches and a weight of about ¼ of an ounce. The average wingbeat of a hummingbird in flight is 55 strokes per second, but a defensive or amorous male can dive at his target reaching up to 200 wingbeats per second.

For its size, hummingbirds surpass all other warm blooded creatures on earth in energy consumption. During the daylight hours a hummingbird averages feeding every fifteen minutes in order to survive. Because the hummingbird cannot continue feeding at night, it may go into a torpor (a period of dormancy) to conserve excess fat and carbohydrates until it can feed again. In addition, hummingbirds cannot fly if their body temperature is below 86°F.

Nectar feeders set the desired table for hummingbirds, orioles and sometimes woodpeckers and chickadees. Placing the feeder close to natural food sources encourages the hummingbirds to feed on flowers planted there. Be sure to hang several feeders and place them far apart. Hummingbirds are extremely territorial and aggressive around a single food source! Often small insects can be found in the mouth of a hummingbird feeder. These are welcome sources of protein for the hummingbirds. Hummingbirds have many similarities with butterflies, moths and skippers (Lepidopterans).

For additional information on the types of plants, trees and shrubs favored by hummingbirds, please see Fact Sheet [HLA-6435](#), Landscaping and Gardening for Birds. For more information on lepidopterans, see Fact Sheet [HLA-6430](#), Landscaping to Attract Butterflies, Moths and Skippers.