

# THE HUMMINGBIRD GARDEN



## HUMMINGBIRD FACTS

- The only hummingbird common to Virginia is the Ruby – throated Hummingbird.
- Hummingbirds feed about every ten minutes during daylight hours. Nectar sipping is the primary means of obtaining body fluids and energy. Flowers attract hummingbirds so plant lots of them. Choose flowers that bloom from early spring through fall to provide a constant source of nectar.
- Their natural flower attractants are tubular in shape, surprisingly scentless and brightly colored (**orange, red and pink are most favored**). Color is especially important during migration.
- Be sure to include vines and shrubs that provide shelter and cover. Once attracted to your yard they will also come to feed at feeders. The primary source of protein is small insects.
- Hummingbirds do most of their drinking at flowers but they do like to take a bath every now and then. They use beads of water on leaves or at shallow brooks. If you have a birdbath make sure there are shallow areas for the hummingbirds to bathe. A few flat rocks in the water will provide a shallow area that is attractive to hummingbirds as well as other birds. Hummingbirds will also fly through the spray of sprinklers. They love to rub against dripping wet leaves as well as to fly through a mist to bathe. Misters that attach to a garden hose can be found in garden shops or nature stores. A drip nozzle can also be added to a birdbath.
- Put out old bananas or other over ripe fruit to attract fruit flies. Hummingbirds love these tiny insects!
- Keep at least one feeder filled with fresh nectar. Hang the feeder in a shady place with some trees or bushes close by for the hummingbirds to perch in when not feeding or bathing. If you attract more than one hummingbird, you might have hummingbird fights on your hands! They are very protective of "their" feeder. To solve this, hang several feeders in different parts of your yard.



- Create different levels of vegetation in your yard. Planting flowers, shrubs and trees gives hummingbirds a choice of places to perch. Hummingbirds can be territorial about their sources of nectar. By providing a variety in your landscape it gives more places for the birds to perch, fly and feed.

### Feeder Care

Hummingbird feeders need to be cleaned, and nectar changed every 3-4 days--more often in hotter weather. If the nectar becomes cloudy, or black spots appear inside the feeder this is mold which can be fatal to the hummingbirds. Scrub the feeder with a bottlebrush and hot water (a little vinegar can be added if you like). If a bottlebrush is not available, add a little sand to the hot water and shake to remove the mold. Never use harsh detergents, cleaners or chemicals. Always rinse the feeder with hot water each time the nectar is changed. During very hot weather, the solution may need to be changed and the feeder cleaned every two days. If done on a regular basis, mold should not be a problem. Don't fill the feeder more than half full, because the hummingbirds won't be able to drink all the nectar before it will need to be changed.

### Remember:

- Never add red coloring.
- Never use honey or corn syrup.
- Make sure your feeder is clean.
- Hang your feeder in a shady place near some trees or bushes.



### Nectar Recipe:

1-cup white granulated sugar  
4 cups water

Boil 2 minutes and allow the solution to cool before filling feeders. Do not boil longer as a more concentrated sugar solution can cause health problems. Store any leftover nectar in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to one week.

### Why Aren't There Any Hummingbirds at My Feeders?

- Your feeding solution may have fermented—keep feeders clean and fresh.
- You live in a poor habitat. An area without flowers will not attract hummingbirds.
- It may be breeding season. Hummingbirds that have been to your feeders may have moved to a different area to breed.
- You might just be looking at the wrong time.

# Plants for Hummingbirds in the Mid-Atlantic Region

## Top 10 Favorite Hummingbird Plants

Trees	Exposure	Moisture Requirements	Flowering Time	Comments
<b>Flowering dogwood</b> <i>Cornus florida</i>	Part sun to light shade	Moist but well-drained soil	Late spring	White & pink blooms, orange-red fall berries. Grows to 30 ft. Provides nectar, shelter/cover.
<b>Flowering crabapple</b> <i>Malus</i> spp.	Full sun	Moist but well-drained rich soil	Spring	Pink or white blooms with small yellowish apples late summer into fall.
<b>Red Buckeye</b> <i>Aesculus pavia</i>	Light shade	Moist but well-drained soil	Spring	A good under story tree with a non-symmetrical shape. A good accent plant with red blooms.

Shrubs	Exposure	Moisture Requirements	Flowering Time	Comments
<b>American cranberrybush</b> <i>Viburnum trilobum</i>	Full sun	Moist but well-drained soil in full sun	Late spring to early summer	White flowers. Red fruit clusters from late summer to fall. Grows to 12 feet. Provides nectar, shelter/cover.
<b>American Elderberry</b> <i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	Full sun	Moist	Mid summer	Creamy white blooms, small red fruits in clusters in late summer. Grows to 12 feet. Provides nectar, shelter/cover.
<b>Arrowwood</b> <b>Virburnum</b> <i>Viburnum dentatum</i>	Full sun to Partial sun	Moist but well-drained, rich soil	Last spring to early summer	White blooms, blue-black fruit in fall. Grows to 15 feet. Provides nectar, shelter/cover.
<b>Butterfly bush</b> <i>Buddleia davidii</i>	Full sun	Moist but well-drained, soil	All summer	(Perennial shrub) Chose red, purple or lilac colors. Prune to 12" in early spring. Provides nectar, shelter/cover.
<b>Lilac</b> <i>Syringa</i> spp.	Full sun	Well drained, fertile, slightly alkaline soil	Late spring	"Belle de Nancy" and "Souvenir de Louis Spath" Provides nectar, shelter/cover. Grows to 15 feet.
<b>Red-osier dogwood</b> <i>Cornus sericea</i>	Partial sun	Well drained, moist, fertile soil	Late spring to summer	White blooms with globular fruits late summer into fall. To 10 ft. Provides nectar, shelter/cover.
<b>Rhododendrons</b> <i>Rhododendron catawbiense</i>	Partial shade	Moist to dry fertile, acid soil	Spring	Large native shrub, which has large purplish/pink, blooms. Hummingbirds will spend hours feeding on the nectar. Provides nectar, shelter/cover.
<b>Scarlet Firethorn</b> <i>Pyracantha coccinea</i>	Full sun	Well drained soil	Summer	(evergreen shrub) White blooms with red, orange or yellow fruits in late summer. Grows to 15 feet. Provides nectar, shelter/cover.

Flowers	Exposure	Moisture Requirements	Flowering Time	Comments
<b>Ageratum</b> <i>Ageratum houstonianum</i>	Full sun to partial sun	Moist well drained rich soil	Summer into fall	(Annual) Pink, blue or white, to 14 inches.
<b>Astilbe</b> <i>Astilbe x arendsii</i>	Partial shade	Rich, moist soil	Late spring & summer	(Perennial) Red, pink, lilac, peach, maroon or white blooms. Grows to 4 feet.
<b>Bee Balm</b> <i>Monarda didyma</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained soil	Summer to fall	(Perennial) Whorled flowers in pink, red, white & reddish purple. Fast spreader.
<b>Black-eyed Susan</b> <i>Rudbeckia fulgida</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained soil	Late summer	(Native perennial) Yellow-orange flowers with distinctive black center. Grows to 3 feet.
<b>Butterfly weed</b> <i>Aesclepias</i>	Full sun	Moist to dry soil	Summer	(Wildflower) Bright orange, red-orange or yellow-orange flowers. Grows to 30 inches.
<b>Canada Lily</b> <i>Lilium canadense</i>	Sun/Partial shade	Moist well drained soil	mid-summer	(bulb – perennial) Try to plant the red or orange but yellow will also attract. Large 5" flowers.
<b>Cardinal Flower</b> <i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	Full sun	Wet to Moist soil/ bog	Mid to late summer.	(tender perennial) Brilliant red flowers. Grows 2-4 feet. Mulch heavily during winter.

Flowers	Exposure	Moisture Requirements	Flowering Time	Comments
<b>Cleome</b> <i>Cleome hasslerana</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained soil	summer	(Annual) Spidery whorls of pink, white and purple on 4' plants. Will readily self-seed.
<b>Columbine</b> <i>Aquilegia canadense</i>	Sun/Partial shade	Moist well drained soil	spring	(Perennial) Long-spurred flowers held above rosette of lobed foliage. Early nectar source!
<b>Coral bell</b> <i>Heuchera</i>	Sun/Partial sun	Moist well drained soil	Spring into summer.	(Perennial) Long-blooming tiny red, pink, or white blossoms. Early blooms attract hummers.
<b>Cosmos</b> <i>Cosmos</i> spp.	Full sun	Moist well-drained soil	Summer	(Annual ) Red, orange, yellow, pink, maroon or white blooms. Grows to 6 feet. Will self-seed.
<b>Evening primrose/ sundrops</b> <i>Oenothera</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained soil	Summer	(Native perennial) Yellow, pink or white blooms. Grows to 6 feet. Can be invasive.
<b>Four-o'clocks</b> <i>Mirabilis jalapa</i>	Full sun to partial sun	Moist well drained soil	Summer	(Annual) Bushy plant with red, yellow, white, pink flowers opening in late afternoon.
<b>Fuchsia</b> <i>Fuchsia</i> spp	Morning sun/ shade	Moist but well drained rich soil	Summer	(Annual) Pendent flowers in red, purple, pink, white. Use in pots & baskets.
<b>Geranium</b> <i>Pelargonium x hortorum</i>	Full sun	Moist but well drained rich soil	Summer	(Annual) Pink, salmon, red or white blooms. Use in borders and containers.
<b>Geranium, scented</b> <i>Pelargonium</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained rich soil	Summer	(Annual) Remember; even less showy flowers are still attractive to hummingbirds.
<b>Globe thistle</b> <i>Echinops ritro</i>	Full sun	Drought tolerant	Summer	(Native perennial) Pink or purple flowers on 4 foot tall plant. Plant in rear to hide lower foliage.
<b>Goldenrod</b> <i>Solidago</i>	Full sun	Drought tolerant	Summer to early fall	(Native perennial) Yellow blooms on 1-5 ft tall plants.
<b>Heliotrope</b> <i>Heliotropium arborescens</i>	Afternoon shade	Moist well drained rich soil	Mid-summer	(Annual) Purple or white. Grows to 4 feet.
<b>Hollyhock</b> <i>Althaea</i> or <i>Alcea</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained average soil	Late summer	(Biennial) Tall spikes of colorful flowers atop 5-6 foot tall plants. May need staking.
<b>Hummingbird flower</b> <i>Zauschneria californica</i>	Full sun	Drought tolerant	Late summer into early fall	(annual) Bright red clustered flowers, grows to 18 inches. Try <i>Ghostly Red</i> .
<b>Indian Pink</b> <i>Spigelia marilandica</i>	Full sun to light shade	Moist well drained soil	Late spring	(perennial) Low growing, clump forming with bright red flowers trimmed in yellow.
<b>Ironweed</b> <i>Veronia noveboracensis</i>	Full sun	Moist to wet soil	Late summer into fall	(Native perennial) Bright violet flowers, grows to 7 feet.
<b>Hyssop</b> <i>Agastache</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained soil	Summer	(Perennial) Densely packed, narrow spikes of tiny flowers.
<b>Impatiens</b> <i>Impatiens wallerana</i>	Partial sun/shade	Moist well drained rich soil	Summer	(Annual) Bedding annual with red, white, pink, lavender flowers. Use in containers.
<b>Lobelia</b> <i>Lobelia</i> spp.	Full sun	Moist to wet soils	Mid to late summer	(Perennial) Bright red, blue or purple, grows to 3 feet.
<b>Lupine</b> <i>Lupinus</i> spp	Full sun	Moist well drained loose soil	Late spring & summer	(Native perennials) Orange, red, pink, purple or white depending on cultivar. Grows to 4 feet.
<b>New England aster</b> <i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	Sun to light shade	Moist well drained soil	Fall	(Native perennial) Pink, cherry-red, purple or white blooms, grows to 30 inches,
<b>Nicotiana</b> <i>Nicotiana</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained rich soil	summer	(Annual) Tubular blossoms. Avoid 'Nikki' hybrids. Grows to 30 inches.
<b>Penstemon</b> <i>Penstemon</i>	Full sun	Requires perfect drainage	Summer	(Perennial) Tubular flowers in blue, white, pink, and purple.
<b>Petunias</b> <i>Petunia</i> spp	Full sun	Moist well drained soil	All summer	(Annual) Variety of trumpet flowers. All will attract hummingbirds. Use in borders & pots.
<b>Phlox</b> <i>Phlox paniculata</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained soil	Summer	(Perennial) Garden favorite with fragrant flowers in pink, red, white, and lilac.

Flowers	Exposure	Moisture Requirements	Flowering Time	Comments
<b>Pineapple sage</b> <i>Salvia elegans</i>	Full sun to part sun	Moist well drained soil	Fall	(Annual) Large bush with late-blooming bright red flowers. Vital to the migrant hummingbirds.
<b>Purple coneflower</b> <i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained soil	Summer	(Native perennial) Mauve with orange-brown center, grows to 4 feet.
<b>Red-hot poker</b> <i>Kniphofia uvaria</i>	Full sun	Constantly moist soil	Late spring to summer	(Native perennial) Bright red, turning yellow with age, plant grows to 5 feet.
<b>Salvias</b> <i>Salvia coccinea</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained soil	All summer	(Perennial or Annual depending on species) Brilliant red flowers in <i>S.splendens</i> .
<b>Spotted Jewelweed</b> <i>Impatiens capensis</i>	Light shade	Moist well drained soil	Summer through fall	(annual) Self-seeding.
<b>Mexican Sunflower</b> <i>Tithonia rotundifolia</i>	Full Sun	Moist well drained soil	Summer	(Annual) Huge bushy single-stemmed branching plant to 8' high and 4' wide, orange-red flowers.
<b>Tropaeolum</b> <i>Nasturtium</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained rich soil	Summer	(Annual) Brightly colored (and edible) blooms!
<b>Yarrow</b> <i>Achillea</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained soil	All summer	(Perennial) Plant brightly colored varieties.
<b>Zinnia</b> <i>Zinnia elegans</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained soil	Summer/early fall	(Annual) Purple, red, orange, yellow, pink flowers. Deadhead to keep plants blooming.

Vines	Exposure	Moisture Requirements	Flowering Time	Comments
<b>Cardinal Climber</b> <i>Ipomoea quamoclit</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained. Mulch over roots	Summer	Vine grows to 10 feet. Bright red flowers. Fast-growing. Annual in Mid-Atlantic region. Provides nectar, shelter/cover.
<b>Cross Vine (Trumpet Flower)</b> <i>Bignonia capreolata</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained soil	Summer	Evergreen to semi-evergreen vine with reddish-orange clustered flowers, grows to 30 feet. Provides nectar, shelter/cover.
<b>Mandevilla</b> <i>Mandevilla splendens</i>	Partial shade	Moist well drained rich soil	All summer	(Tender perennial-take indoors before frost) Hot pink tubular flowers. Provides nectar, cover.
<b>Trumpet honeysuckle</b> <i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained soil	Summer	Red to orange flowers in hanging clusters, grows to 12 feet. Can be evergreen. Provides nectar, shelter/cover.
<b>Trumpet Creeper</b> <i>Campsis radicans</i>	Full sun	Moist well drained soil	Summer to fall	Fast-growing, vigorous vine with orange tubular flowers. Needs strong support. Blooms on new wood.

Ground Covers	Exposure	Moisture Requirements	Flowering Time	Comments
<b>Bunchberry</b> <i>Cornus canadensis</i>	Partial shade	Needs moist but well-drained, acidic soil	Late spring/summer	(native deciduous) Blooms with red berries in summer & fall. Grows to 6 in.. Provides nectar.
<b>Creeping Mahonia</b> <i>Mahonia repens</i>	Partial shade	Well-drained soil	Late spring into early summer	(native evergreen) Yellow blooms with dark blue berries in winter. Grows to 3 ft. Provides nectar, shelter/cover.
<b>Creeping Snowberry</b> <i>Gaultheria hispidula</i>	Shade.	Rich, moist but well-drained soil	Late summer	(native evergreen groundcover) White blooms, white berries in early fall. Grows to 6 inches. Provides nectar.
<b>Partridgeberry</b> <i>Mitchella repens</i>	Shade	Rich, moist, but well-drained, acid	Early summer	(native evergreen) White blooms with bright red berries in summer. Height 2 ins. Provides nectar.

**VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

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