

Welcome Hummingbirds to Your Garden

*With feeders,
plants & water*



By Chris Caviezel

The last two years have seen the migrating Rufous Hummingbirds showing up at Snoqualmie Pass on April 1st and arriving in Cle Elum about two weeks later. The males show up first, with the females close behind. Upper Kittitas County is known to be home to the Calliope, Black Chin and recently Anna's Hummingbirds as well.

Attracting hummingbirds to your home sometimes requires patience, but it's a lot of fun once the hummingbirds have found your home. It has been said that hummingbirds will search every square inch of their habitat for food. To attract hummingbirds to your yard there are several things you can do.

Feeders

Putting up a hummingbird feeder is the first thing you can do. Using a basic glass hummingbird feeder that is red in color at the base with home made (fresh) nectar is best.

Making home made nectar is easy. Boil *four parts water to one part sugar cane*. Completely cool the nectar before putting it in the feeder. Unused nectar may be stored for up to three weeks in the refrigerator.

During *cool weather*, nectar placed in a feeder can last up to a week. When weather drops below freezing, a *three part water to one part sugar* nectar solution may be used to keep it from freezing down to approximately 27 degrees. Alternatively, feeders can be pulled in and stored in the refrigerator at night, and/or swapped during the day (with a feeder in the refrigerator).

During *hotter weather*, nectar needs to be replaced every 2-4 days. A *five-part water to one part sugar* may be used to slow down the spoiling process.

In order to keep the hummingbirds happy, feeders should be thoroughly cleaned with hot water each

time the nectar is changed or refilled. Once a month, a diluted bleach solution should be used to soak the feeder for an hour. Do not clean your feeders with soap or place in the dishwasher.

Do not use red food coloring and do not use honey. There is no study that shows any benefit to coloring, and using honey can be fatal.

It is better to have multiple small feeders, than one large feeder. This reduces the chance of one hummingbird dominating the feeder and chasing others off.

When first putting out a feeder, it may be best to put it away from your house. Feeders near houses are less likely to be seen. Additionally, movement from inside the house may scare the hummingbird away. It should be visible from above, and in a less distracting place. Once you have hummingbirds visiting your feeder, you can move it closer to your house for better viewing.

Feeders should be kept out for approximately one week after the last hummingbird has been spotted for any straggling migratory birds. Occasionally, some locations may have a hummingbird staying over the winter. Keep your eyes peeled!

Plants that Attract Hummingbirds

Another way to attract hummingbirds to your yard is by making your garden friendly towards the little birds. Attracting hummingbirds with plants is a fun way to draw them to your house. At the same time it creates a wonderful garden!

Generally, hummingbirds like nectar-producing plants. Choose plants that bloom at different times of the year, during the time hummingbirds are known to be present in your area. Native plants are best! There are trees and shrubs that are favored by hummingbirds, particularly since they spend most of their day perching and resting. A chart showing favored plants of specific species of hummingbirds as well as favorable trees, shrubs, window box plants, hanging box plants, vines, wildflowers is available at www.hummingbirdonly.com.

Using Water to Attract Them

Adding water to your yard is another way to encourage hummingbirds to stick around. Water is especially appreciated during hot

weather. Moving water is best since it tends to stay fresher and cleaner than non-moving water. There are four general ways that you can add water to your garden.

Bird Bath - A birdbath is a quick way to add water to your garden. It is important to clean the bath on a consistent basis. The one drawback with a birdbath is the water is not moving.

Water Fountain - A water fountain has the benefit of utilizing running water and it adds to your garden decor. Also, some water fountains have the ability of recycling water.

Dripper - A dripper has the benefit of moving water, and in most cases can re-utilize the water if combined with a birdbath or used in a pond. A dripper combined with a birdbath to recycle the water keeps it fresh.

Low Flow Mister - A low flow mister (a gallon an hour) is inexpensive and is an easy way for hummingbirds to bathe as well as cool off on a hot day!

For more information visit www.hummingbirdsonly.com. Chris Caviezel is a Hummingbird Enthusiast, and a member of the Kittitas Audubon Society.



ANNA'S IN KITTITAS - LAST SUMMER WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRDS WERE SEEN IN KITTITAS COUNTY. THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN ON JULY 7, 2205 AT A HOME IN THE UPPER HILLS OF CLE ELUM. LATER IN THE SUMMER, A DIFFERENT ANNA'S WAS BANDED AT SNOQUALMIE PASS. THIS WINTER AN ANNA'S FED CONSISTENTLY AT A HOME IN ELLENSBURG.

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