



HELPFUL HUMMER HINTS

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NECTAR RECIPE

Mix 4 parts water with 1 part table sugar (example: 1 cup water, ¼ cup sugar). Boil the water to ensure complete saturation, and please do not add food coloring! The red color of the feeder will attract the hummers and the food dye may be harmful. Store extra nectar in your refrigerator. Change the nectar every few days. It will ferment quickly in warm weather.

While boiling the water will help slow the fermentation of the nectar initially, the nectar in hummingbird feeders is contaminated as soon as it is sipped by a bird. Therefore, it is not necessary to boil the nectar once the sugar has been dissolved. If you use extra fine sugar, no boiling or heating may be needed.

With either method, let cool completely prior to filling your feeder. Cover and refrigerate extra nectar for up to two weeks.

WHEN TO PUT HUMMINGBIRD FEEDERS UP

Ruby-throated hummingbirds, the only species found east of the Mississippi, usually return to the Cincinnati Tri-State area in late April/early May. April 15th is a safe bet to catch any early travelers. While you're at it, put out orange halves at the same time to attract orioles!

WHERE TO PLACE THE FEEDERS

In the beginning place your feeder where the hummers can see it from the air. They are attracted to the color red so, if necessary to make your feeder more visible, add red ribbons or material that will be easily seen. Once the hummingbirds have found your feeder, move it to a location suitable for optimal viewing.

KEEPING ANTS & BEES AWAY FROM FEEDERS

Ant traps (moats) are available and are very effective at keeping ants from crawling into feeders. Bees are another problem! Applying Avon Skin-So-Soft to the pole and areas of the feeder not near the feeding ports is an effective way to keep the bees away. Feeders with bee guards are available and keep the bees from getting inside the feeder, but won't keep them from getting on the feeder. They are, of course, attracted to the sweetness of the nectar.

WHY DO HUMMERS FIGHT?

Hummingbirds are very territorial. Often you'll see a male hummer sitting on a branch keeping guard over one feeder. As other birds approach the feeder he "buzzes" them off. One solution is to hang up more than one feeder in different areas of your yard.

WHEN TO TAKE THE HUMMINGBIRD FEEDERS DOWN

Your feeders are stop-over spots for the birds migrating from further north. During migration, hummingbirds are building up fat reserves to help them make that last push across the Gulf of Mexico. It's about a 500-600 mile flight, and the little guys do it non-stop; it takes them about 20 hours!

Don't take it down until the hummingbirds have all migrated! Hummingbirds, like all migratory birds, instinctively know when to return to their wintering grounds. No amount of hummingbird feeders is going to prevent their migration. Leave your hummer feeders up until 1-2 weeks have gone by during which time you have seen no hummingbirds. This could be as late as mid-October here in the Cincinnati Tri-State area; it would not hurt to leave the feeder out until October 31st. This will ensure that all the ruby-throats migrating from North America have the energy required to get to their wintering grounds in Mexico and Central America. We want them healthy so they can turn around and return to our feeders next Spring!