

# ATTRACTING BUTTERFLIES TO YOUR YARD

Butterflies and flowers were made for each other, and there are certain flowers that butterflies absolutely love to be around. As the poet pointed out, butterflies are flying flowers, and flowers are tethered butterflies.

In attracting butterflies to your garden, it's important to understand what they want most out of life: nectar. The ancients, who believed that nectar fell directly from heaven, named it after the wines of the gods.

A **butterfly's wish list** also includes sunny open spaces, shelter from the wind, and fresh water. They also look for host plants where they will lay their eggs (some butterfly species are fussier than others as to what plants are best); once the larvae hatch, the host plants will serve as food for the developing caterpillars. To encourage butterflies to your garden, it is good to include food for both young (host plants) and adults (nectar plants).

## List of Plants That Attract Adult Butterflies

For a nectar-rich flower border designed to attract adult butterflies, consider the plants listed below. Then invite a few butterflies over for a drink.

Common Name	Latin Name	Common Name	Latin Name
Allium	<i>Allium</i>	Goldenrod	<i>Solidago</i>
Aster	<i>Aster</i>	Helen's flower	<i>Helenium</i>
Bee balm	<i>Monarda</i>	Hollyhock	<i>Alcea</i>
Butterfly Bush	<i>Buddleia</i>	Lavender	<i>Lavendula</i>
Catmint	<i>Nepeta</i>	Lilac	<i>Syringa</i>
Clove Pink	<i>Dianthus</i>	Lupine	<i>Lupinus</i>
Cornflower	<i>Centaurea</i>	Lychnis	<i>Lychnis</i>
Daylily	<i>Hemerocallis</i>	Mallow	<i>Malva</i>
False indigo	<i>Baptisia</i>	Milkweed	<i>Asclepias</i>
Fleabane	<i>Erigeron</i>	Mint	<i>Mentha</i>
Floss flower	<i>Ageratum</i>	Pansy	<i>Viola</i>
Globe thistle	<i>Echinops</i>		

## ATTRACTING HUMMINGBIRDS TO YOUR YARD

Although hummingbirds usually weigh less than an ounce, these tiny birds have a lot of energy. When the wind blows in the direction in which they are flying, they can travel up to 50 mph. The long flights and wing beating can make a hummingbird weary. As often as every 15 minutes, they look for a place to rest on trees and shrubs with small leaves. Particularly favorite plants include birch trees, butterfly bushes, and honey locusts. Don't worry if you do not have these plants in your yard—your hummingbird might also rest on your feeder's hanger.

For centuries, gardeners have been fascinated with the beauty and aerobatics of hummingbirds. **The key to attracting hummingbirds to your yard is to plant lots of flowers and provide the habitat that will give them shade, shelter, food, and security.**

- Herbs, flowering shrubs, dwarf trees, and vines all can be used to create an ideal tiered habitat from ground level to 10 feet or more.
- Provide lots of space between plants to give hummingbirds enough room to hover and navigate from flower to flower.
- Hummingbirds love water, especially if it is moving. A gentle, continuous spray from a nozzle or a sprinkler hose is perfect for a bath on the fly.
- Hummingbirds do not have a keen sense of smell and rely on bright colors to find their food. They are particularly fond of red and are often observed investigating red feeders, plant labels, thermometers, and even red clothes on a gardener. Brightly-colored flowers that are tubular hold the most nectar, and are particularly attractive to hummingbirds. These include perennials such as bee balms, columbines, daylilies, and lupines; biennials such as foxgloves and hollyhocks; and many annuals, including cleomes, impatiens, and petunias.

Here are more summer plants that attract hummingbirds, especially varieties in red and orange shades.

Common Name	Latin Name	Common Name	Latin Name
Beard tongue	<i>Penstemon</i>	Foxglove	<i>Digitalis</i>
Bee balm	<i>Monarda</i>	Lily	<i>Lilium</i>
Butterfly Bush	<i>Buddleia</i>	Lupine	<i>Lupinus</i>
Catmint	<i>Nepeta</i>	Petunia	<i>Petunia</i>
Clove pink	<i>Dianthus</i>	Pincushion flower	<i>Scabiosa</i>
Columbine	<i>Aquilegia</i>	Red-hot poker	<i>Kniphofia</i>
Coral bells	<i>Heuchera</i>	Scarlet sage	<i>Salvia splendens</i>
Daylily	<i>Hemerocallis</i>	Scarlet trumpet honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>
Larkspur	<i>Delphinium</i>	Soapwort	<i>Saponaria</i>
Desert candle	<i>Yucca</i>	Summer Phlox	<i>Phlox paniculata</i>
Flag	<i>Iris</i>	Verbena	<i>Verbena</i>
Flowering tobacco	<i>Nicotiana glauca</i>	Weigela	<i>Weigela</i>

Be aware that it's not just what you plant but how you garden that matters. Anna's hummingbirds dine on insects and spiders as well as nectar, and an organic garden provides far more bugs to eat and safe places to shelter than one treated with chemicals.

## **FEEDERS**

Select feeders that have red on them somewhere to attract hummers. Feeders with several feeding ports seem to work best. Choose feeders that come apart easily so they can be cleaned thoroughly. Molds and bacteria will spoil your sugar solution after several days of hanging in warm weather.

### **Cleaning**

Don't forget to clean and change the solution in your feeders about every 4 to 5 days. Clean feeders thoroughly with a bottle brush, hot water and a little vinegar to discourage mold (do not use any soap or detergent). Don't hang out more feeders than you have time to clean and maintain. Poorly cleaned feeders are a hazard to the birds' health.

### **Solutions**

Some commercially-produced solutions offer a formula complete with vitamins and minerals. Any solutions with dye, food coloring or flavoring in them are considered unsafe and aren't needed. Red coloring isn't necessary because most feeders already have something red on them to attract hummingbirds.

Hummingbirds can get fatal hardening of the liver from eating a heavy sugar syrup. For that reason a solution that is no more than 1 part sugar to 4 parts water is recommended. Boil the water, stir in the sugar, and remove the solution from heat. This will retard mold growth. Let the solution cool before filling your feeder.

Don't use honey or artificial sweeteners in your feeder. Honey helps fungus grow and contains botulism toxins that can kill hummingbirds. Birds may quickly starve to death eating artificial sweeteners because they contain no calories.

### **Locations**

Place your hummingbird feeder where you can watch it and where it can be easily reached for cleaning and refilling. Shady spots are best for keeping the sugar solution cool, which keeps mold growth down.

Since hummers tend to fight over feeders hung close together, placing them far apart or out of sight of each other will attract more birds.

Plant or place nectar-producing blossoms near feeders so hummingbirds will also have insects and natural nectar for a more balanced diet.

### **Problems**

If your sugar solution attracts ants, bees or wasps, apply petroleum jelly around the openings of the feeders and on the wire from which it hangs. Or try moving the feeder to another spot. Don't use insect sprays or repellents to control insects on or around the feeder. If stinging insects are a problem, try spraying a fine mist of water from a hose onto the feeder. The water will at least chase away the insects for a while, and the hummers may enjoy the shower.