
Hummingbird Feeder Maintenance Tips - Nectar Recipe



Hummingbirds feed on flower nectar and insects. To make your own nectar, the correct solution that resembles plant nectar should be:

- 1 part sugar
- 4 parts water

Boil the water first, then add the sugar. The boiling water will ensure your nectar stays fresh longer and retards fermentations. Add the sugar to the water after it has boiled. Do not boil the sugar and water together. Doing so will cause some of the water to evaporate and will create nectar that is too concentrated. If the nectar is too sweet it can damage a bird's liver.

DO NOT USE:

- Red food coloring or dye
- Artificial sweeteners which have no nutritional value
- Honey which ferments quickly and causes a deadly fungus

Place your feeder in the shade and keep out of direct sun and wind. Be sure to clean your feeder regularly and replace the solution every week. Clean your feeder with hot water or a 10% bleach solution. Rinse thoroughly and allow to dry completely before refilling. Change your solution every two to three days when the weather is hot or consistently over 60 degrees.

Fending off bees and ants from hummingbird feeders:

Ants and bees can also be attracted to a hummingbird feeder. If you are having this problem, you might try the following:

- Ants can be defeated by coating the wire or string by which the feeder hangs with Tree Tanglefoot (TM) or another sticky substance. The ants will be unable to reach the hummingbird feeder until dust or enough dead ant bodies provide a bridge across the sticky substance. If you periodically wipe the dead ants and dust off and reapply the sticky material, you can discourage the ants. They will usually give up after a while and go look for an easier source of food. Be careful not to apply the sticky material where it can get on the feathers or feet of the hummingbirds. Just apply it where it will discourage the ants.
- Bees may be managed in a couple of ways. Let the hummingbird feeder go dry for a week or so and the bees will leave it. Another trick is to move the hummingbird feeder periodically. Bees do an interesting dance in the hive to tell other bees the direction and distance to a source of nectar. If you move the hummingbird feeder, the information in the dance will be inaccurate until another bee finds it and tells the hive. Then just move it again. The hummingbirds find the nectar by sight; they are attracted to the red tip of the feeder.