

Flowers for Our Feathered Friends

By Mark Peterson



While hummingbird feeders are a great supplemental source of nectar, but given the choice of flower nectar or sugar water, the best choice for our hummingbird friends is always a natural food source. Here are some seasonal charts of blooming flowers to provide nature's bounty for them year-round, but in the winter most hummingbirds in our area spend it in Central or South America.

DESIGN

Since hummingbirds tend to be quite territorial, it may be necessary to replicate small multi-season beds throughout your landscape. For example, you may wish to plant 5-7 multi-seasonal plants in small beds, adjacent to one another, within a long rectangular or large oval beds divided with paths into quarters or fifths.

Spring – Citrus, Columbine, Crossvine, Daffodils, Daylily, Jerusalem sage and *Mexican honeysuckle

Summer – *All Salvia species, Blue curl, *Cenizo, *Crape myrtle, Desert willow, *Esperanza, *Firebush, *Flame acanthus, *Pride of Barbados, *Red yucca, *Skullcap, Texas betony, *Turk's cap

Fall – *All Salvia species, *Esperanza, *Turk's cap, Firespike, Gayfeather, *Shrimp plant, Firecracker, Plant/fern

**Plant species denoted with an asterisk are WaterSaver Coupon eligible.*

MAINTENANCE

After the initial planting, you must water to establish your hummingbird food source. Frequent, but light watering is always paramount. Water 3-6 days a week for 3-6 weeks. After the establishment phase, bimonthly watering is sufficient. Always add mulch or a mulch/compost mix to your beds in May and September.