

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Humming along



Plant pretty petunias as annuals to appeal to the hummers.



Bees love zinnias, too!

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Hummingbirds remain in landscapes that provide all the supplies they need to survive and thrive. Besides planting species that will feed them, there are other things you can do to encourage hummingbirds to hang around.

Bathing Fountain: Due to the sticky nature of the nectar, hummingbirds need to bathe frequently. They prefer running water in a shallow area. Bubbling fountains or misters are an important investment in their healthcare. They even will frequent sprinklers!

Nests: Hummingbirds do not nest in birdhouses. They build tiny, usually around 1 inch in diameter, nests camouflaged with lichen, moss, and spider webs. This makes them hard to discover. They can be 3-60 feet from the ground and sometimes as much as a half-mile from their favorite food sources.

Feeders: Place feeders in areas where you'll be able to watch the frenzy. It's best to have multiple feeders to reduce territoriality. Hang them high enough to be safe from cats or predators which include snakes, squirrels, and larger birds. Recommended height is at least 4 feet from the ground.

Recipe for homemade nectar:

*Boil 4 quarts of water and let it cool. Tap water is fine. Do not use distilled water.

*Dissolve 1 cup cane or beet sugar in the cooled water. Do not use any

other type of sugar, artificial sweetener, or honey.

*Fill feeder $\frac{3}{4}$ full or however much is used within a few days.

*Store unused remainder in a closed container in the refrigerator for a week.

Maintenance of feeders: It is important to change the mixture every 4-5 days. If the weather exceeds 90 degrees, the nectar will ferment. Change it more often if it gets cloudy. Clean feeders between refilling without topping off. Many feeders can be safely sanitized in the dishwasher. Otherwise, use mild detergent, wash, and rinse thoroughly. Monthly sterilize the feeders in a solution of bleach and water.

Other Tips: To entertain all pollinators, maintain an organic landscape free of pesticides, insecticides, and chemical fertilizers. Your garden is their dinner table, and their daily dining provide the ingredients for your dinner table.

My garden is buzzing with every type of pollinator. As I sit in my office writing this article, a beautiful, black-chinned hummingbird with its shimmering purple and white collar was busy outside my window investigating my roses. Again, I couldn't get an appropriate photo through the window screen and shutter, but the visit was enchanting.

See the beauty in everything and thrill to the metallic humming of the wings of these living hovercrafts. Fly joyfully through your day!

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.