

Hummingbirds, Butterflies & Bees

Hummingbirds

Hummingbirds are not only beautiful- they are fast! Their wing-beats have been measured at 200 per second. Hummingbirds can hover and even fly backwards. This agility helps them to get the necessary amount of nectar, small insects and water they need to sustain themselves.

Planting tubular flowers like Bee balm or Trumpet creeper will help attract hummingbirds. Nectar feeders will supplement the diets of your neighborhood hummers. Use four parts water to one part sugar to make a solution. Do not use honey. Boil the water, turn off heat, and then add the sugar. Adding red dye to the solution is not necessary. Remember to thoroughly clean feeders every three or four days and refill with fresh solution.

There are 340 species of hummingbirds in the world. The Ruby-throated hummingbird is the only species of hummingbird that breeds in Maryland. They migrate here from Southern Mexico and Central America every spring and return in the fall. Males normally arrive first and scout out territories rich in food. Setting out feeders in late March will attract the males to your area.

Leave feeders up through the fall months to provide these migratory birds with food for their journey. Also, migrating birds moving through the area will have a place to refuel.

Butterflies and Bees

Butterflies and bees can add a special grace to your garden and both play an important ecological role in the reproduction of plants. Butterflies in Maryland have evolved to make the most use of native plants. See the table below for more information on plants for butterflies.

If you would like your garden to become a butterfly "nursery", then you may want to include those plants that are used by caterpillars. These plants are referred to as 'host' plants.

Bees are a great addition to any garden, especially because they perform important roles in pollinating plants. About 30% of the food we eat has been pollinated by a bee!

To provide butterflies and bees with water, add about a quarter inch of sand to a large saucer, such as a clay flowerpot liner. Add water until a quarter inch of water rises above the sand. Place a few flat stones that rise above the water and others that just touch the surface. This will allow insects to drink without drowning.

Flowers, flowers, flowers!


























Hummingbirds, butterflies and bees come to flowers to feed on the nectar that they produce. Iridescent hummingbirds, glimmering in the sunlight as they dart from flower to flower, are a rewarding sight for any wildlife gardener. A garden filled with flowers blooming at various times from spring to fall may be visited not only by hummingbirds, but also by a colorful assortment of butterflies, bees and nectar-eating moths.

There is a practical side to the color and beauty of flowers and their nectar-eating visitors. Flowers use these animals to transfer pollen to other flowers of the same kind. In this way, the hummingbirds and insects play a vital role in the reproduction of many plants. The colors on the animals serve to protect them from predators by camouflage or to warn predators against their toxic nature.



Photo by: Richard Orr

Plants for Hummingbirds, Butterflies & Bees

Plant Name	Attracts			Blooms	Soil
Asters (<i>Aster</i> sp.)				August - October	
Bee Balm (<i>Monarda didyma</i>)				July - September	Moist
Boneset (<i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i>)				July -October	Dry-Moist
Cardinal flower (<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>)				July - September	Moist
Columbine (<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>)				April - July	Dry
Coral Bells (<i>Heuchera sanguinea</i>)				April -- June	Moist
Evening primrose (<i>Oenothera biennis</i>)				June-October	Dry
Goldenrod (<i>Solidago</i> sp.)				July - September	Dry
Ironweed (<i>Vernonia altissima</i>)				August-October	Moist
Joe-pye Weed (<i>Eupatorium purpureum</i>)				July - September	Moist
Liatris (<i>Liatris</i> sp.)				July - September	Dry
Milkweed (<i>Asclepias</i> sp.)				June - August	
Purple Coneflower (<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>)				June - October	Dry
Trumpet Creeper (<i>Campsis radicans</i>)				June - September	
Turks cap Lily (<i>Lilium superbum</i>)				July - September	Moist
Virginia bluebells (<i>Mertensia virginica</i>)				April-May	Moist



Bee Balm



Evening Primrose



Ironweed



Virginia bluebells

For more information on Maryland's Wild Acres, then visit the website:

<http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/habitat/wildacres.aspx>



Lawrence J. Hogan, Governor; Mark Belton, DNR Secretary

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