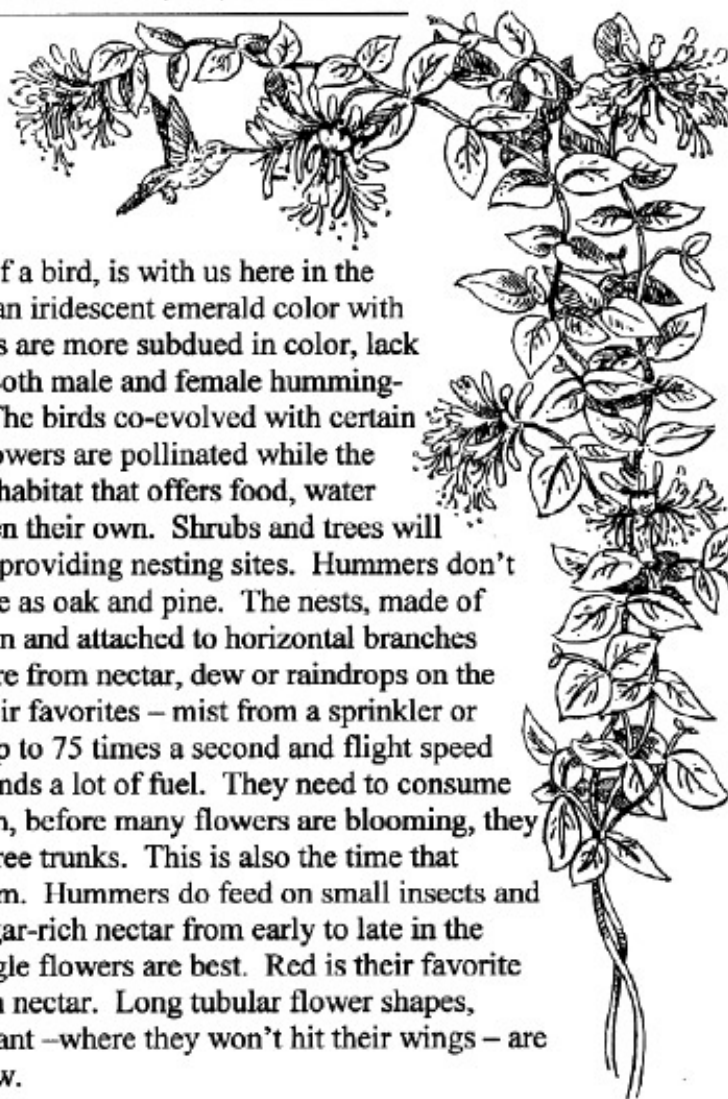




Uncanoonuc Mt. Perennials

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Hummingbird Gardens

The Ruby-throated Hummingbird, that fascinating jewel of a bird, is with us here in the northeast from mid-spring through early fall. The males are an iridescent emerald color with the trademark bright red throats and forked tails. The females are more subdued in color, lack the red throats, and have blunt tails tipped with white dots. Both male and female hummingbirds have long, needlelike beaks and even longer tongues. The birds co-evolved with certain types of plants like Penstemons and Salvias whose tubular flowers are pollinated while the hummingbirds feed on their rich nectar. Providing a diverse habitat that offers food, water and shelter will encourage hummingbirds to make your garden their own. Shrubs and trees will provide protection from predators and the weather as well as providing nesting sites. Hummers don't use birdhouses, constructing their tiny nests in trees as diverse as oak and pine. The nests, made of downy plant material and bits of leaves, are coated with lichen and attached to horizontal branches with strands of spider webs. Sources of water include moisture from nectar, dew or raindrops on the curve of a leaf, shallow puddles or bird baths, and- one of their favorites - mist from a sprinkler or fountain. The three to four inch long birds flap their wings up to 75 times a second and flight speed averages twenty-five miles an hour. This activity level demands a lot of fuel. They need to consume half their body weight in sugar every day. Early in the season, before many flowers are blooming, they will feed on the sap that bleeds from Sapsuckers drilling on tree trunks. This is also the time that specialized hummingbird feeders can be of extra value to them. Hummers do feed on small insects and spiders, but nectar is their mainstay. A garden that offers sugar-rich nectar from early to late in the season will be a hummingbird magnet. Brightly colored, single flowers are best. Red is their favorite color, but they will visit other colored flowers that are high in nectar. Long tubular flower shapes, especially those that dangle and hang on the outside of the plant - where they won't hit their wings - are most attractive. Some hummingbird favorites are listed below.

Annuals:

Fuchsias
Millionbells
Petunias
Salvias
Spiderflowers

Shrubs:

Azalea
Beauty Bush
Flowering Quince
Highbush Blueberries
Weigela

Vines:

Honeysuckles
Morning Glory
Mandevilla
Trumpet Vine

Perennials:

Beebalm	Foxgloves**	Siberian Iris
Bleeding Hearts	Hollyhocks**	True Lilies
Cardinal Flower	Maltesc Cross	
Columbines	Penstemons	
Coral Bells	Phlox	
Crocsmia	Salvias	**biennials

Interesting web site: www.hummingbirds.net

Source for feeders: Duncraft 1-800-593-5656 (www.duncraft.com)