



Photo © Ron Austing

Darting Hummers & Scarlet Blossoms

You've planted clumps of tempting red, orange, and yellow flowers. Whirring wings, darting bodies, and clicking chirps announce the presence of hummingbirds. Only a pollinator with a long thin bill of the right length can reach the nectar hidden deeply within the tubular flowers.

Floral color, tubular blossoms, copious nectar, and bloom timed to coincide with bird migration—are features of this coevolutionary duet. Many red tubular flowers are pollinated almost exclusively by hummingbirds that depend on this bounty of nectar.

Hummingbirds must eat several times their weight in food each day of their lives. Their hearts beat as fast as 1,260 times per minute, and require 6,000 to 12,000 calories every day to support their high metabolic rates. They supplement their sugar diets by catching small flies, other insects, and even spiders.



*Hummingbird
Garden*