

Feeding Hummingbirds

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We are deriving great pleasure from the Hummingbirds. The first one appeared at the egg cup on June 14, later than last year by eleven days. I am sure that she is the old original, for she came directly to the honey and needed no coaxing. For a month she had it to herself but has now been joined by at least two others.

To save frequent refills I have given them three plastic egg cups, two red and a blue placed on little shelves on the upright between the window panes. In front of two of them are perches. One little bird, a very neat and trim little lady with a whiter breast than the other invariably perches with wings folded while she sips her drink.

The old bird is very beligerent, often sitting on a low lattice about six feet back, while awaits she the arrival of the others. There are fierce pursuits and angry chirps as they whizz like bullets past the window or up over the house. She often reminds me of a little sentinel, with her tiny rifle pointed upwards toward what she considers her own private food supply.

I was amused one day to see a little bird remove one tiny foot from her feathers and scratch her head--all this, while still suspended in the air.

I had a most interesting letter from a bird lover in Nanaimo, B.C., asking how to go about attracting Hummingbirds. To all such, I would suggest these points:

(1) Place your most showy houseplants in the window to which you wish to attract the birds.

(2) If possible have a windowbox or flower bed under the window. I have a box of nasturtiums on a cement block below mine, and am fortunate in having my flower garden the full length of the house, on the east.

(3) Arrange bright paper around the mouth of small bottles, filled with honey and water. The birds do not like a sticky syrup, about three teaspoons to a cup of water seems to suit their taste best. I use rain water.

(4) With fine wire or adhesive tape, fasten the bottle at a slant, outside the window and watch for the first Hummingbird.

(5) When a bird is well established, put out a bright egg cup, but leave the bottle also until she is accustomed to the new container.

These little birds are very timid at first, so one must be very still while watching. After three summers I can approach the window from the inside to within a few inches of my old bird, but the others, I watch at a distance.

Visitors who come to our home are greatly facinated by these little winged marvels, and we who see them every day, never cease to take new delight in them. The females are the more easily attracted as they find the honey a good food supply for their nestlings.