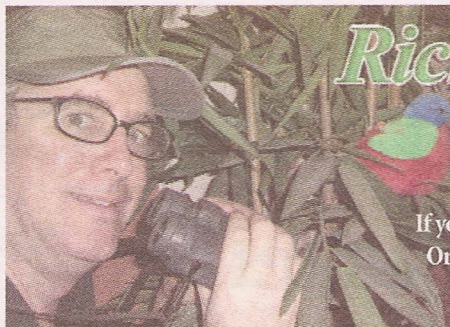


Rich's Backyard Birds

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If you have a question for the Bird Man, his email is: Rich@RichsBackyardBirds.com
Or stop by the store in the FishHawk Publix strip center at 5670 FishHawk Crossing Blvd.

Or call 813-657-BIRD(2473) ...Or try telepathy (results vary)

Rich Crete is the owner of Rich's Backyard Birds and has been a birder for over 30 years.

When should I put out my hummingbird feeder and what recipe do you suggest for nectar? R.T. FishHawk Ridge

That is two questions at once there, RT, I may have to charge you a little extra. Many of us were always told to put our hummingbird feeders out in April and remove them in September. That is not the case here in Florida. We have hummingbirds all 12 months of the year. We just don't have yearly residents. Let me explain. A lot of hummers spend the summer farther north and many of those birds migrate to Florida for the winter. We also have some that spend the summer months here and then migrate across the Gulf and spend the winter in The Yucatan. Because of this, you should keep your feeders out all year. It is vitally important to have them out after a freeze. Many of the hummingbirds natural food sources are eliminated by a hard freeze, so having your nectar available can really help them recover from the really cold nights.

Your nectar should be mixed to a 4:1 ratio. Mix four cups of water with one cup of sugar. Boil then keep

Rich's Backyard Birds Hummingbird Plants

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Firebush (yr) | Azaleas (s) |
| Butterfly Bush (yr) | Coral Honeysuckle (w) |
| Bee Balm (s) | Firespike (w) |
| Pink Porter Weed (w) | Chinese Hat (w) |
| Trumpet Creeper (s) | Red Buckeye (w) |
| Bottle Brush (yr) | Salvia (yr) |
| Lily of the Nile (s) | Candy Corn Plant (w) |
| Cigar Plant (yr) | Shrimp Plant (yr) |
| Turk's Cap (yr) | |

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chilled. Some folks think they are giving the birds a treat by making the nectar stronger. This is not good for them. Stick with the 4:1. The key is to change the nectar every two days, even in the winter. Nectar will get bacteria and turn cloudy and even moldy if it is left out

longer here in Florida. If your nectar is old, the birds will not drink it and will find a different source of food. If you had spoiled food in a restaurant you wouldn't

be in a hurry to return, would you?

You can increase your chances of attracting hummingbirds to your yard with plants. Because there are so many natural food sources for them in the area, a feeder alone is not as likely to attract them as it is farther north. Try to have something blooming all year long.

Many people who grew up in the north were taught if you didn't bring your feeders in early in the fall the hummers would not migrate. Let me put this politely: Balderdash! By removing them here, all you'll do is lessen your chances of seeing the birds.