

ISSUE 124 | JUNE/JULY 2024

HIGH DESERT

GARDENING

THIS ISSUE:

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- Gardening tips for June & July
- Plant profile - Fragrant Abelia
- Upcoming events
- Using cayenne pepper to prevent pests in the garden



Oregon State University
Extension Service



ATTRACTING HUMMINGBIRDS TO YOUR GARDEN

Source: Jeff L. Olson and Nancy Allen, OSU Extension

Elements of a hummingbird garden

Hummingbirds are attracted to a variety of species and structures that fulfill their habitat needs. They like trees, bushes, vines, flowers, hanging and potted plants, hummingbird feeders, and water. They feed on tree sap and the insects that are attracted to it. Tall, medium, and small trees, shrubs, and flowers and grassy areas provide the birds many spots to feed, nest, or perch in the garden.

Plants

Hummingbirds are stimulated by color, especially the color red. Clumps of bright red, orange, and pink flowers are more visible to them than other colors. Plants with red, tubular-shaped flowers are an excellent choice for your garden.

If you have electric fences with red insulators, paint them white or black so hummingbirds won't be attracted to them and shock themselves.

A typical hummingbird plant has many flowers with open blossoms. The flowers are on the outside of the plant, so hummingbirds can feed from them without hitting their wings against the foliage. It is important to leave enough space around flowers for hummingbirds to maneuver.



Most hummingbird plants do not have fragrance. Fragrance is not as important for attracting hummingbirds, as it is for butterflies.

Wildflowers that are native to your area are a good choice. They provide the highest quality nectar and are plants the birds recognize. Also, they are better adapted to the local climate, elevation, and soils, so they are more likely to thrive.

Think of blooming periods when you decide which

species to plant. Put in plants that bloom in succession from early spring to late summer to ensure a food source for hummingbirds throughout their stay. This also extends your chance to see them!

Table 2 lists preferred hummingbird plants. The list includes species that are native to the Pacific Northwest. You also can ask about native plants at your local nursery, or contact a Master Gardener through the Oregon State University Extension office in your county.

Water

Hummingbirds need water, too. They use water mostly for bathing. They meet most of their drinking needs from nectar.

You can provide water with a birdbath, sprinkler, or pond. If you buy a birdbath, make sure it has a rough surface for good footing and is no deeper than 1.5 inches. If you already have a birdbath, you can put rocks in it to make the water shallower.

Perches

Perching spots are also beneficial. Usually, hummingbirds use broken tree limbs, the insides of bushes, fence posts, and even TV antennas for perches. If you have removed dead tree limbs and wish to supply perches, attach 1/4-inch wood dowels to trees or other objects near the birds' territory. Good spots are above the garden or near your bird feeder.

Hummingbird feeders

To attract hummingbirds to your yard, you only might need to put up a hummingbird feeder. These provide a primary food source close by, so the hummingbird saves energy.

Making a nectar solution

Commercial nectar solutions are more expensive than homemade ones. And, they may contain preservatives, dye, food coloring, or flavoring which can harm hummingbirds. You can make a safe, simple nectar solution at home. Use one part cane sugar to four parts water. Do not use honey, artificial sweeteners, or food coloring. Boil the solution for at least 30 seconds to retard fermentation and mold growth. Do not microwave the solution, because the microwaves break down sugar molecules and can change the nutritional value. Let the solution cool before you fill the feeder. You can store the solution in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks before it begins to ferment.

Where to place your feeder

Put your feeder where it will not be in direct sun for extended periods. Sun causes the solution to mold sooner. Also, hot air in the top of the feeder can expand, forcing liquid out. It's a good idea



Hummingbird Garden, continued from Page 3

Table 2. Characteristics of hummingbird plants.

Nectar plants	Plant height	Blooming period	Light needs	Soil needs
Trees				
Dogwood *	20-30'	June	F-sun, P-shade	Moist to dry
Crabapple *	20-30'	June	F-sun, P-shade	Moist
Shrubs and brambles				
Siberian pea-shrub	10-15'	Early May	F-sun, P-shade	Moist to dry
Red-flowering currant *	6-10'	March and April	F-sun, P-shade	Moist to dry
Garden perennials and wildflowers				
Columbine *	6-24"	Spring to summer	F-sun, P-shade	Moist to dry
Indian Paintbrush *	8-20"	Spring	F-sun, P-shade	Moist to dry
Bleeding heart *	8-18"	April to June	P-shade	Moist
Coral bells *	1-3'	April to August	F-sun, P-shade	Moist to dry
Lavender	8-18"	April to June	P-shade	Moist
Cardinal flower	8-18"	April to June	F-sun, P-shade	Moist to dry
Beebalm	1-3'	April to August	F-sun, P-shade	Moist to dry
Penstemon *	1-3'	April to August	F-sun	Moist to dry
Scabiosa	2-3'	Summer	F-sun	Moist to dry
Annual garden flowers				
Clarkia*	6-36"	Summer	F-sun	Dry
Sweet William	6-24"	Summer	F-sun	Moist
Sage	Varies	April to September	F-sun	Dry
Vines				
Trumpet vine	3-4'	Late summer	F-sun	Moist
Scarlet runner bean	30-40'	Spring	F-sun	Moist to dry
Orange honeysuckle *	2-3'	Spring	F-sun, P-shade	Moist to dry

* Plant may be native to Pacific Northwest



to place feeders near nectar-producing plants. That way, hummingbirds can get a more complete nutritional balance from a variety of nectars and insects. Place your feeder where you can clean and fill it easily. Clean and refill it every 4 or 5 days, or when it begins to look cloudy, or if you notice wild yeast forming. Yeast appears as flecks on the surface of the liquid around the edges. You can clean the feeder with a bottle brush, hot water, and a little vinegar. Hummingbirds can be territorial around feeders. For this reason, most people prefer to have several small feeders rather than one large one.

Feeders also attract insects

Hummingbird feeders can attract ants, bees, and wasps, so you might want to place bee guards over the feeding ports. New feeders usually have them. You also can smear the surface around the feeder openings with petroleum jelly, salad oil, or mineral oil so insects can't get a foothold. Or, move your feeder to a new spot. Do not use pesticides to kill the insects around feeders. Hummingbirds might ingest chemicals while collecting nectar. Also, the pesticides could kill insects that are food for the hummingbird.

To read more, download the full PDF at <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/ec1541>



PHOTO CREDIT: AMY JO BETWELLER

COMMON CAUSES OF BLOSSOM-END ROT

- There is insufficient calcium in the soil.
- Excess nitrogen, magnesium, potassium, or sodium has been applied as fertilizer.
- Very wet or very dry conditions interfere with the uptake of calcium.
- There is a combination of these causes.



PHOTO CREDIT: C.M. OCAMB

NEW PUBLICATION...

BLOSSOM-END ROT OF TOMATOES

Source: Iain C. MacSwan, OSU Extension Service

It's common for home gardeners in all parts of Oregon to become alarmed about blossom-end rot of tomatoes during the period when the fruits are enlarging. Other fruiting vegetables, including peppers, eggplants, pumpkin, watermelon, and squash, can also exhibit blossom-end rot. This is a physiological disease resulting from imbalances in water and plant nutrients. It is not caused by fungi or bacteria and does not spread from plant to plant. There are no tomato varieties adapted to Oregon that are highly resistant to this disorder. The control lies in understanding the causes and then applying the necessary gardening skills to prevent the disease.

To read more, visit <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pub/fs-139-blossom-end-rot-tomatoes>

Thank you to our
High Desert Garden
Tour sponsor





In the vegetable garden

- Protect young vegetables from frost by having row cover (frost cloth) on hand. Place over crops when needed.
- Water your vegetable and flower gardens early in the morning.
- Use season extenders, such as walls of water, around tomatoes and other tender plants.
- Protect berry crops from birds with rigid bird/deer netting.
- Protect your vegetable garden from flying insects with row cover.
- Seed beans, and harvest broccoli, peas, lettuce and radishes.
- Keep your potatoes and tomatoes consistently moist by watering thoroughly; this will produce better quality crops.



PHOTO CREDIT: AMY JO DETWELLER

In the landscape

- Prune your lilacs, forsythia, rhododendrons, and azaleas after the flowers fade. If new growth has started, you'll have to wait until next year after blooming to prune. You can prune your other deciduous trees and shrubs at this time. Be sure and use proper pruning techniques to keep your plants healthy.
- Aerating your lawn will remove compacted soil, increase water and nutrient flow, and stimulate new growth. When your done aerating, spread a fine compost, about a quarter inch thick over your entire lawn using a spreader. This will increase the water holding capacity, decrease water use, and provide nutrients.



PHOTO CREDIT: OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY



PHOTO CREDIT: AMY JO DETWEILER

- Water turf between 4 inches to 6 inches per month, approximately 1.5 inches per week.
- Most lawns in Central Oregon are composed of Kentucky bluegrass, fine fescues, and perennial ryegrass and prefer a mowing height of 2.0 inches to 2.5 inches for optimal turfgrass health.
- For a more drought tolerant groundcover consider using Turf type tall fescue or other low growing plants.
- Lawns can be fertilized late June through early July.
- Fertilize your shade/ornamental trees, shrubs and perennials with fertilizer mixtures such as 10-6-4 or 20-10-5, once during the growing season.
- Manage weeds while they are small and actively growing with light cultivation or herbicides. Once the weed has gone to bud, herbicides are less effective.
- Pinch back annuals such as zinnia, geranium, and impatiens to keep them full of blooms.
- Plant flowers such as fennel, dill, roses and marigolds that attract beneficial insects such as ladybugs.
- Plant trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals anytime during the growing season.
- Deep water your trees, shrubs and perennials every five to seven days.



PHOTO CREDIT: AMY JO DETWEILER



PHOTO CREDIT: AMY JO DETWEILER

PLANT PROFILE

FRAGRANT ABELIA

(*ABELIA MOSANENSIS*)

Source: Amy Jo Detweiler

About 12 years ago, we had a little unknown shrub called Fragrant Abelia donated to us for trial in our demonstration garden. I was not familiar with this particular plant at the time, but we planted it and it has been a rock star in our garden ever since! This year it was just loaded with flowers and pollinators love it!

Exposure: Full sun to afternoon shade

Water: Low to moderate water use

Soil: Prefers moist, well-drained soil

Growth Habit: Open, irregular growth habit

Flowers: Extremely fragrant pink flowers in cluster covering the entire branch

Foliage: Glossy green leaves in summer followed by excellent fall color

Use: Foundation planting or mixed borders

The Good: Attracts a massive amount of native pollinators and is touted as being a more deer resistant (not browsed often) plant. This species is more cold hardy than other abelia. Has performed well in cold, dry winters.



PHOTO CREDIT: AMY JO DETWEILER

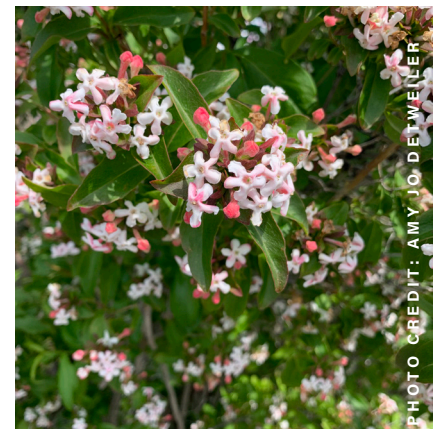


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UPCOMING EVENTS

Garden Fair & Plant Sale

June 1 - 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM at OSU Extension - Deschutes County.

To get more information, visit <https://www.gocomga.com/upcoming-classes-events>

Level Up Series - June & July

June 11 - What's Eating My Food?: Garden Pest Management

July 9 - Giving It Away: Growing Produce You Can Take to the (Food) Bank

Visit <https://beav.es/qCv> to register.

High Desert Garden Tour

July 20 - 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM around Crook County. Tickets are \$15 for adults and can be purchased in advance online. Children under 18 are free. Visit <https://beav.es/cyU> for more information.

29TH ANNUAL
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TICKETS \$15 FOR ADULTS. KIDS UNDER 18 FREE.
TICKETS GO ON SALE IN JUNE.

Saturday, July 20 9:00am to 3:30pm

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LOCAL FARMER'S MARKETS

Bend Farmers Market — Wednesdays, through October 9th, 11:00am -3:00pm in the Brooks Alley between NW Franklin Avenue and NW Minnesota Street

NorthWest Crossing Saturday Farmers Market — Saturdays from June 1st - September 28th, 10:00 am-2:00 pm. Located on NorthWest Crossing Drive, in NorthWest Crossing Community Center in Bend

Redmond Farmers Market — Thursdays, June 13th - September 12th, 3:00pm - 7:00pm at Centennial Park in Downtown Redmond on the corner of Seventh Street and Evergreen Avenue

Sisters Farmer Market — Sundays, June 2 - September, 10:00am - 2:00pm — Fir Street Park at the corner of Main and Fir in Sisters

Prineville C.R.O.P. Farmers Market — Saturdays, June - September, 9:00am - 1:00pm at Stryker Park in Downtown Prineville on the NE 4th St and Court St

Madras Saturday Market — Saturdays, May - September, 10:00am - 2:00pm — Sahalee Park at the corner of 7th and B in Madras, OR



PHOTO CREDIT: NC EXTENSION

“But it’s
important
to note that
capsaicin is toxic
to pollinators...”
- Dr. Dana
Sanchez, OSU
professor &
wildlife
specialist

GARDENING TECHNIQUES

YES, CAYENNE PEPPER CAN HELP KEEP WILDLIFE OUT OF YOUR GARDEN

Source: Erin Jones, KGW News

THE QUESTION

Can cayenne pepper keep wildlife out of your garden?

THE ANSWER

Yes, cayenne pepper can keep wildlife out of your garden. However, it can also be harmful to some pollinating insects, pets and people.

WHAT WE FOUND

Our sources agree that cayenne pepper can keep wildlife, like squirrels, rabbits and rodents, out of your garden. Cayenne pepper can also be used to repel insects. However, it can be harmful to bees and other pollinators, so it’s important to use caution when applying it. Capsaicin, the main chemical that makes cayenne peppers hot, is a temporary animal and insect repellent due to its strong odor and hot taste.

“Capsaicin is the compound in chile (cayenne) peppers that produces a burning sensation. It can repel mammals like squirrels and rabbits,” Jon Traunfeld, extension specialist and director of the Home and Garden Information Center at the University of Maryland, told VERIFY.

The National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) says that most wildlife, except birds, will avoid capsaicin in backyards and gardens because it has such a strong odor and hot taste that some animals don’t like. Birds, on the other hand, cannot taste the chemical and

will not be repelled by it.

“Scientists think peppers evolved to produce capsaicin to keep animals from eating the fruit,” Steve Reiners, Ph.D., a plant science professor at Cornell University, wrote in 2021.

Capsaicin is most concentrated inside chile peppers near the seeds, according to Reiners and Dan Gleason, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shop in Eugene, Oregon.

“[Capsaicin] stimulates a certain kind of pain receptor found in mammals but not in birds, and that’s why birds have no adverse reaction to eating peppers,” Gleason said.

“In mammals, these pain receptors are found throughout the body, not just in the mouth, which is why it is recommended that you wear gloves when peeling and handling jalapeño peppers, for instance,” Gleason added.

In addition to deterring animals, the University of Connecticut says capsaicin is also used as an insect repellent. It can be used to control aphids, spider mites, thrips, whitefly, lace bugs, leafhoppers and other pests by damaging cell membranes and disrupting the nervous system, according to the university. But it’s important to note that capsaicin is toxic to pollinators like bees and other beneficial insects, including some that reside in the soil, according to Dana Sanchez, Ph.D., associate professor and extension wildlife specialist at Oregon State University.



Scientists do not recommend applying products containing capsaicin to blooming crops or weeds if bees or other beneficial insects are visiting the treatment area. Products containing capsaicin are usually sold as aerosols, liquids or in granular formulations, such as ground cayenne pepper. The NPIC says the use of these products can cause coughing and temporary blindness in animals (including pets), and can also prevent their vocal cords from working for a short time. In humans, inhaling products that contain capsaicin can also cause coughing, difficulty breathing, production of tears, nausea, nasal and severe eye irritation, as well as temporary blindness, according to the NPIC and Roger Dickens, technical services manager at Terminix.

While capsaicin can work as a temporary animal and insect repellent, Sanchez and Traunfeld say there are long-term management options gardeners may want to consider to keep out wildlife, such as exclusionary techniques like fencing, caging, row cover, insect netting and tulle.

“The problem is you would need to apply a sufficiently high concentration of capsaicin in the right locations and then maintain it through the season,” Traunfeld explained.

“But sunlight, rain and irrigation water, and soil particles would dilute it over time. Plus, mammals can become desensitized to capsaicin through regular exposure,” he added.

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HIGH DESERT GARDENING

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More gardening information
can be found at
<https://beav.es/TZh>
Or scan the QR Code

